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MEMORIAL
OF
REV. E. P. WILLIAMS,

LATE MEMBER OF THE

ONEIDA CONFERENCE

OF THE

M. E. CHURCH:

BEING A CHOICE COLLECTION OF HIS

SERMONS AND SKETCHES OF SERMONS,

WITH A BRIEF

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

"HE, BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

SYRACUSE:
DAILY JOURNAL PRINT, POST OFFICE BUILDING.
1859.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by

A. J: GROVER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Northern District of
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P R E F A C E .

The risks of this publication are great; but it has been undertaken with the expectation that it would be favorably received by the Methodist ministry and membership. Some memorial, besides a mere obituary notice should be preserved of our best and ablest men.

When the papers of Rev. E. P. Williams were put in my hands, it was intended to publish a choice selection of sermons, essays, addresses and poetry. This plan would perhaps have brought out a better representative volume than the one now offered to the public; but not one of more permanent value. His strength of mind is most manifest in his sermons, and especially in his sketches of sermons.

This volume cannot but be a desirable one to Methodist ministers. It is a memorial of one of their number; of one of the purest and ablest of men; and a repository of rich and original thought.

To laymen this volume will be valuable. Even the

sketches will be read with interest. They are not mere specimens of frame work, but logic on fire.

Many will expect to see certain sermons in this book which have necessarily been excluded. The selection here given, it is hoped will be a good representation of the man, as a preacher of the Gospel of Christ.

A. J. GROVER.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

Biography perpetuates the influence of a good example. A holy life will reproduce itself in the lives of other men, after the individual is gone; but biography perpetuates its direct influence; it holds up an image which will impress its own likeness on the hearts of the beholders. The subject of these pages was a man whose name will not soon be forgotten and whose excellences deserve to be recorded; it is therefore a matter of regret that the materials for a full representation of the noble man and minister are so scanty. This sketch must necessarily be a meagre outline.

Rev. Erastus P. Williams was born June 20th, 1817, in the town of Pompey, Onondaga Co., N. Y. In the Minutes of the Oneida Annual Conference session of 1858, he is said to have been born in January. His parents, and his Journal affirm that it was in June.

At the place of his nativity he spent his boyhood. Perhaps the reader would be pleased to know some-

thing of that interesting period of life. We want to know whether a man who has attained an eminent position was like other children, and whether he evinced early the qualities which gave him prominence in after years. Many traditions are recorded concerning his childish pranks which cannot be mentioned. It appears that he was as restless as the winds that played with his uncombed locks. It required the utmost vigilance to restrain his destructive propensities, and prevent his "mischief from returning upon his own head, and his violent dealing from coming down on his own pate." He seems to have been a confirmation of the current proverb that the most mischievous boys make the best ministers. There was no malicious element in his nature; but he must do something; if he could not create he must destroy. This restlessness was characteristic of the man. Who ever saw him still? This incessant activity together with firm purpose and unfaltering perseverance, made him the superior man he became.

All was not sunshine during his boyhood. Many an unhappy hour did he experience. His proclivities subjected him to frequent annoyance. He was a boy that many other boys would be constantly pecking at. He sometimes thought all his schoolfellows in conspiracy against him. "Often," says he, "I took from

them a severe drubbing; yet I had the satisfaction of seeing it returned by the teacher with compound interest." He was an eager and successful student; head and shoulders above his fellows in virtue and knowledge; yet he was not what is vulgarly called a *smart* boy, that is, he was not proficient in the arts and airs of "Young America." Never did he become a man of fashion and polish. He was entirely oblivious to all the whimsical laws of fashionable society. But the very carelessness of his deportment set off more perfectly the brilliancy of his mind.

From an early age he had a quenchless thirst for knowledge. He was a great reader. He perused every book that came into his hands with eagerness. Frequently, aye, invariably his book was his companion, in his hours of toil as well as pleasure. In the hay and grain field, while others would be enjoying their luncheon, he would be enjoying his favorite author. He would follow the plough with book in hand; and however much this dissatisfied others, it is said his team never complained of his tastes. Thus passed his boyhood. At the District School in the winter; occupied with the labors of the farm during the summer.

In his sixteenth year, while yet at the parental home, he was converted to God. This auspicious

event occurred under the labors of Rev. Charles Dunning, now a Presiding Elder in the Black River Conference, then an exhorter employed by the Presiding Elder on a part of Pompey circuit. His conversion was sound and satisfactory. It appears that from a small boy he was accustomed to pious reflection. The accidents with which he met were accompanied with moral lessons which he appreciated and remembered. He was once on a Sabbath day precipitated from the scaffolding of his father's barn upon the floor, and was considerably, though not dangerously injured; concerning which he remarks: "A well timed comment on this circumstance was more efficacious in deterring me from Sabbath breaking than a volume of sermons." When quite small he was impressed by a serious illness. Little hope was entertained for his recovery. Two of his school fellows died, while he was confined to his bed. These circumstances faithfully and affectionately improved by a teacher, gave a serious turn to his whole future life. These incidents, not in themselves remarkable, show how early his mind was occupied with the greatest of subjects, and with what readiness he realized the hand of a beneficent Deity in all the events of life. Here was the germ of that simple faith which characterized the future Christian man and minister. He also refers in a

sermon, which the reader will find in this book, to the instructions of his Sabbath School teacher as having much to do in making him a Christian. But not until he heard the word of life from the young ambassadors of the Cross did he fully consecrate himself to God. The work was genuine; and to his dying day he walked worthy of his vocation.

At this period he reluctantly entered upon the work of teaching which he continued for many years. His conversion, as well as his scholarship qualified him for the work. It does not appear that he had at this time any intimation of the calling of his life. But God led him in a path of preparation for that calling though he knew it not. His second term of teaching was interrupted by an illness that brought him to the very verge of the grave. Contrary to expectation he recovered, but for a long time remained in a feeble condition. Being unfitted for the labors of the farm, he was permitted to attend the Academy at Manlius village part of two seasons. Here he obtained a knowledge of the higher mathematics, and the natural sciences; also some acquaintance with ancient and modern languages. This sickness was an important event. It deepened his piety, and, as he says, gave a new turn to his life. It gave him advantages which could not otherwise have been obtained.

At this early period of life his talent began to be appreciated. He wrote and read before the Manlius Missionary Society a report full of interest, which, by request, was published in the "Western Banner." About this time, he delivered by request an oration on the Anniversary of our country's natal day. On this occasion he represented in powerful and glowing language, the deadly influence of intemperance, slavery, dueling and mobocracy on the institutions of our land. This was certainly a bold and good beginning.

He also attempted the composition of poetry. Many of his poems were published. He was not born a poet; but all through life endeavored to write poetry, and, perhaps, to some extent succeeded. He remarks in reference to this habit, "Almost from my childhood, I have endeavored to cultivate an acquaintance with the muses; and though I found it hard to write, 'twas harder to restrain the impulse."

Having arrived at the age of twenty-one, after much deliberation as to his future course, he resolved to fall in with the tide of emigration westward. He left the parental home Sept. 13th 1838. Whether he wept at his departure or not, we cannot tell; but he felt, and in the Journal which he commenced at this time he gives a record of the feelings of his heart. He writes: "Farewell, kind and beloved friends—

parents, brothers, sisters; ye haunts of learning, affectionate children, my pupils and my friends—farewell!”

He passed through Michigan, Wisconsin, and finally located in Illinois. This was before that country was covered with its net-work of railroads, and its broad prairies occupied by the hardy emigrants who have made it the garden of the world. His first location was on Indian Creek, about twelve miles from Ottawa. Here he became the teacher of a very pleasant school of about thirty scholars. His Journal shows that he was contented with his position and prospects. To this western home he carried the religion which he had embraced. The West has perhaps, more backsliders on its soil than any other portion of the globe; but he clung to the religion of his youth, and found it a delightful companion on his journeys, and a comforter in his trials. His Journal contains but little of his religious experience; but a single entry is found in his account of his early life. That will show that worldly interests did not so absorb his attention, that the interests of his soul were forgotten.

“Here let me record,” he remarks, “my gratitude to the Donor of every good and perfect gift, for all his mercies. My lot has hitherto fallen in pleasant places. I have been surrounded by friends and com-

forts, and have enjoyed excellent health. Lord ! may I be consecrated to thy service—make me wholly thine.

‘ The covenant I this moment make,
Be ever kept in mind ;
I will no more my God forsake,
Nor cast his words behind.’ ”

He continued in the work of teaching during his stay in the West. He had several fits of sickness, one of which lasted four months and was very severe. Having closed up his affairs, and recovered his health, he returned to the East in the spring of 1840. He was in Illinois a year and a half. Though sickness frequently interrupted his employments, he was on the whole successful. This journey no doubt, had much to do in making the successful and self-reliant man.

He united with Oneida Annual Conference in 1842. His first charge was Chittenango, in Cazenovia District. The writer of these pages now resides among the people whom he first served. Many years have passed since his removal from this place ; but his name is yet as “ ointment poured forth.” From the first he took a high position as a Christian and Minister.

Just before the Conference from which he received his appointment to Chittenango, he was married to

Miss Elizabeth Rice ; a lady of superior excellence, one well qualified to relieve the cares, and brighten the path of the itinerant. But they were permitted to walk together only two short years. God then called her to receive her "recompense of reward." So interesting is the sketch of her life, written by the pen of her surviving husband, while his heart was quivering under the severe stroke, that the reader will pardon the insertion of its substance.

Elizabeth Rice was born in Ashby, Massachusetts, Dec. 16th, 1814, two and a half years before the birth of her husband. When she was three years old her parents removed to the town of Pompey, Onondaga County, N. Y. Bro. Williams' acquaintance with her began at the time she was converted to God. That acquaintance soon ripened into something more than friendship. They were married July 31st 1842, and immediately entered into the itinerancy. In her new sphere of labor as an itinerant's wife, her excellences were the observation of all. Her constant desire was to prove a blessing to her husband, and serviceable to the cause of Christ. Her desires were realized even during her short stay. Her memory is still precious among the people whom she sought to benefit.

But she was too feeble in body for the toils and trials of an itinerant's wife. Many think, perhaps, that

the wife of a minister has an easy life. It is a mistake. The hardships and privations of pioneer life which romance has colored so highly, are not so wearing as the excitement of constantly changing associations, the unreasonable demands of unthinking persons, and not least the constant exposure to scrutiny and criticism. A preacher's wife is not to be envied. Reader, encourage the care-worn wife of the itinerant; do not by coldness or criticism pierce her soul with many sorrows.

After the labors of their first removal to Marcellus, Onondaga County, N. Y., she was quite prostrated. The two years of itinerant life had greatly impaired her constitution. Hemorrhage of the lungs, with other maladies, made her descent to the tomb rapid. Twenty minutes before eight o'clock, November 23d, 1844, she breathed out her life sweetly on the bosom of her Savior.

From the first she was apprised that there was no hope of her recovery. Her husband said to her, "possibly the Lord may raise you up;" she replied, "O no, I am going my dear."

Immediately she began to set her house in order. With perfect composure she made all her arrangements. She put her husband's wardrobe in order, had his study nicely fitted up, distributed her clothing

among her friends,—all the concerns of her household were thought of and adjusted. But with more care she sought a preparation for death. Earnestly she struggled for a more perfect purity. The joy that illumined her emaciated countenance, the gracious words that fell from her lips attested that she did not pray in vain. Holiness was her theme. All who approached her were exhorted to attain it. Her soul was exceedingly happy. Never, during her life did she shout aloud; but in the intense joy of her last hours, Glory! glory! was the burden of her utterances.

Thinking herself dying at one time, she took an affectionate leave of all present, and exhorted them to fidelity; then after a pause, during which she seemed lost to earth, she aroused and asked, “Am I in heaven?” At another time, after being insensible for a time, she asked, “Has the day come when there is no more time?”

Her rapture was now inexpressible. “O, I want to tell you but I can’t,” she would often say. Gathering strength just before her departure she shouted triumphantly, again and again, “Praise God! praise God!” These were her last coherent words. Blessed words! There were broken expressions afterwards, such as, “I have been there, I have been there,”—

“Yes, yes;” but her lips were too soon sealed in death to allow an explanation of their import.

Thus passed away one of earth’s fairest daughters. How complete a realization of the poet’s song :

“Hark ! they whiaper : angels say,—
Sister spirit, come away !
—What is this absorbs me quite,—
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,—
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath ?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

The world recedes : it disappears ;
Heaven opens on my eyes ; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring.
Lend, lend your wings ! I mount ! I fly !
O grave, where is thy victory ?
O death where is thy sting ?

She was buried at Oran, in the town of Pompey, beside her father, a sister, and a brother, who had gone to the spirit land before her. Soon there was erected over her grave a plain and appropriate memorial with the following inscription :

ELIZABETH F.,
wife of
Rev. E. P. WILLIAMS,
and daughter of
THOMAS and CHARLOTTE RICE.
Born Dec. 16th, 1814.
Died Nov. 23d, 1844.

Her life is her monument.

“Who loved her living and laments her dead
Rears this memento o’er her lowly bed.”

Alone, Bro. Williams now continued his journey. His own words will best represent his state of mind. "It is now two weeks and a day since my Elizabeth died. Two gloomy weeks! I cannot confine myself to my studies. My home is desolate; and so is my heart. But in God do I put my trust."

This affliction was not without its spiritual advantages. His Journal after this shows more earnest prayer, more intense longing for a higher and richer experience than at any former period. A few quotations will illustrate the workings of his mind.

"The last year was made up like all others, of minutes and mercies. But, ah! an eventful year in *my* history was 1844. O that the present may be a distinguished year in my christian and ministerial history. Some few mercy drops are falling around us. O that they might come in rich abundance, to render fruitful the garden of the Lord."

"The baptism of a young lady reminds me that the vows of God are upon me. O what solemn promises have been made before God, angels, and men. O God, disclose to me the depths of my heart. Inspire in me a keener relish for the duties enjoined in thy word. Make me an Israelite in whom there is no guile."

"I hope if God spares me this year, to make improvement in several respects.

1.—In preaching. I must not preach so *long* nor so *loud* (if he had kept to this resolution, perhaps he might have been living to-day).

2.—In mind. I must be diligent and faithful as a student. (This resolution he faithfully observed.)

2.—In spirit. I must be a better and holier man. O Lord give me I beseech thee thy grace, that I may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name."

These are but specimen passages. It is only during this period that he records the experience of his soul. And probably at no other period were his feelings more intense, and his desire to promote God's cause more strong. It illustrates the declaration that though God cause grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. And that *all things* shall work for the advantage of those who love God.

Jan. 7th, 1846, he was married again to Miss Frances North, of Marcellus. What he calls a parenthesis in his history was now passed. She yet lives, with a group of little ones around her, to mourn the loss of a husband and father; and now resides at Marcellus, near her father.

During his ministry he served the following charges:

Chittenango, two years.

Marcellus, two years.

Manlius, two years.

Wyoming, one year.

Brooklyn, two years.

State Street, Utica, one year.

Westmoreland, two years.

Verona, two years.

Stockbridge, two years.

Sixteen years in all.

His labors in his last charge were closing successfully. The work of God was reviving around him. Precious souls were being converted. But he was obliged to leave the pulpit for a bed of suffering. A complication of diseases had fastened upon him, and medical skill could not check them. Anticipating a fatal result, he arranged his temporal concerns with remarkable precision and calmness. This done, he resigned himself into the hands of the Savior. He lingered about one week, suffering acutely, but bearing his pains with great fortitude. On the third day of April, 1858, he expired in holy triumph. Though delirious a part of the time, in his last hours he was permitted, with unclouded reason, to attest the power of the gospel.

His death took all by surprise. He seemed least likely of any to be taken away. He has frequently said that he did not know what his brethren meant by being fatigued. But the strong man was taken, while many, to whom the grasshopper is a burden, are left.

His body was made for toil. But there is a limit beyond which the strongest may not go. He could not be persuaded of the possibility of injuring himself; and this no doubt was one cause of his unexpected departure.

He seemed to have a presentiment of his death.— During his meetings he boldly said to a small congregation, that some of them would die that year, and remarked that it might be him. At another time while inviting persons to seek religion, he remarked that it would be the last invitation he should give them. It was thought presumptuous. But it was his last; he had predicted correctly. There can be no doubt but that the spirit impresses the mind with the approach of death in many instances; thus prompting to that preparation which the soul needs.

Death did not take him by surprise. His house was in order, and he was prepared for the master's summons. When told by a friend that he was dying, he replied, "If this be dying, it is blessed dying!" Yes, blessed dying! But is it dying?

"Is that a death bed where the christian lies?

Yes, but not his—'tis death itself that dies."

His death was triumphant. He sung with remarkable strength and fervor the following hymn:

“What’s this that steals upon my frame,
Is it death? Is it death?
That soon will quench this vital flame,
Is it death! Is it death?
If this be death I soon shall be,
From every pain and sorrow free,
I shall the king of glory see,
All is well. All is well.

“Weep not my friends, weep not for me,
All is well. All is well.
My sins are pardoned. I am free,
All is well. All is well.
There’s not a cloud that doth arise,
To hide my Savior from my eyes,
I soon shall mount the upper skies,
All is well. All is well.”

He also sung his favorite hymn,

“Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.”

Soon after, his articulation failed, and he “languished into life.” How blest the righteous when he dies. Such a death was more glorious than Elijah’s translation. There is bliss in dying; and our dear Brother felt it.

The funeral was attended by an immense throng. Many of his previous charges were represented. Bro. D. W. Bristol preached an eloquent and appropriate sermon, which melted all hearts, from the words of Paul to Timothy: “I have fought a good fight, I

have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

He was borne to the grave by his brethren in the ministry. He was buried from our sight. Soon we shall follow him to the grave. But if we die as he died, we shall rise with him in the day of Christ's appearing.

"He's gone! the spotless soul is gone,
Triumphant, to his place above ;
The prison walls are broken down ;
The angels speed his swift remove,
And, shouting, on their wings he flies,
And gains his rest in Paradise.

Father, to us vouchsafe the grace
Which brought our friend victorious through !
Let us his shining footsteps trace ;
Let us his steadfast faith pursue ;
Follow this foll'wer of the Lamb,
And conquer all through Jesus' name."

We close this sketch with a brief portraiture of our departed friend.

He was a man of pure motives and sterling integrity. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. Guile was entirely foreign to his nature. As a Christian he was uniform and consistent. "His

creed, his rich religious experience, and his conduct beautifully harmonized." A pure mind, a strong faith and an unbending integrity were seen in all his deportment. By some he might be regarded as parsimonious; but it should be remembered that if he dealt closely, and saved carefully, that he gave liberally. He gave more than others, because he saved more than others. He was a good exemplification of John Wesley's maxim, "get all you can, save all you can, give all you can."

As a pastor, he was exemplary, diligent, and faithful. He did not fail to admonish his flock of their faults, in his private as well as public ministrations. But few are accustomed to deal as faithfully with those over whom God has made them overseers.

"As a preacher, he was able and successful. His sermons were uniformly characterized by sound sense, luminous, original thought, and replete with Bible truth. Indeed, so intent was he in his preaching, to illustrate great principles, and illustrate mighty truths, that he was perhaps too indifferent to the ordinary rules of pulpit address. Nevertheless he was always listened to with deep interest by all classes; his sermons were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ, and their effect was sometimes overwhelming."

The sermons collected in this book show him to

have been a great preacher. Had it not been for an unmanageable voice, and a faulty elocution, he would have had but few superiors in the pulpit. But in spite of his manner, he frequently preached with overwhelming power.

Brother Williams was a great and good man. May Heaven vouchsafe grace, so that following in his footsteps, we may share with him in heaven's rewards. Long will his name be remembered; long may the salutary influence of his example be felt.

SERMON I.

DUTY OF ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER.

Psalms, cxlv: 4.—“One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”

This text is either the statement of a duty, or a prediction of things yet future. It is either an announcement of what ought to be, or a positive statement of what will be. Viewed in either light, it unfolds in brief but expressive terms the duty of one generation to another. Whatever may be the condition of other worlds, it is certain that we are dwelling in a valley of death. They may be inhabited by a population as unchanging as their mountains, but here one generation passeth and another generation cometh. Sixty years is usually regarded as about the maximum limit of human life; the average length of mens' lives is fixed at about half that period. Leaving out of the account the concluding part of the present and the ensuing century, and assuming the correctness of our

received chronology, and two hundred generations of mortals have lived, and labored, and groaned, and died. At first a solitary pair sat down in Eden's lovely bowers, and all around was an uninhabited waste. From that central point the waves of population rolled over the earth, the valleys and plains began to swarm with life, and cities to lift their domes and towers to the sun. During the first ages of the world the life of man was counted by centuries, and in some instance the history of one man's life was the history of a millenium. As a result of this extreme longevity population rapidly multiplied, and the earth was replenished and subdued. After the flood the three sons of Noah established their families in the three great divisions of the eastern continent, from which streams of emigration flowed to the western world and to the islands of the sea. But it is scarcely necessary to follow down the stream of history, to impress upon us the truth that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Two hundred generations speak to us from the grave; to admonish us of our mortality. Untold millions hail our descent to the tomb, and with mouldering tongues exclaim, "Are ye also become as we are?" And while beneath our feet and o'er our head these equal warnings speak, each flying moment plies its little sickle and thins the ranks of life.

Now each generation being the precursor of the ensuing one, sustains to it important relations, and owes to it numerous and imperative duties. We cannot detach ourselves either from the past or the future, and live only for the present. All that now surrounds us in the way of physical improvements, intellectual advantages, domestic enjoyments, and religious institutions, are the products of the thinkings and the doings of a generation that has passed away. We dwell in houses which our fathers built, we drink of cisterns which they digged, we read the books they wrote, and worship in temples which were erected by their hands and sanctified by their prayers. The result of their labors and their piety has survived them, not only in the monuments they erected to transmit their names and deeds to coming times, but in that invisible and intangible influence they shed abroad, and which now enters into and makes a part of all our intellectual, social, and religious life. All the present is a *result*, of which the causes must be searched for in the past; and again, all the present is a system of *causes*, the *results* of which will be read in the history of the future. No man liveth to himself, or to his generation alone. He lives for other men and other times; and each generation ought so to live as to praise God and his works to those which shall come after.

My text is figurative language. It represents the current generation as speaking to one yet to arise. As when Napoleon led his army o'er the Alps, each regiment, as they scaled the height and looked down upon the plains of Lombardy, rent the air with shouts to cheer their comrades who were toiling in the valleys and crossing the glaciers below,—so should each passing generation speak to the succeeding, in the way best calculated to praise God and his works.

This duty of living for other men and other times, will be entirely obvious by reflecting what the effect would be of adopting the opposite system, and living only for ourselves, and for the present. Suppose we had entered upon the race of life as the successors of men who had acted on this principle, who had entered upon and passed through life indifferent to the interests and destinies of their children and their children's children. In such a case the most of the comforts and facilities we now enjoy would have been wanting. No habitations designed to last for generations, would have been erected; no sanctuaries, save what would have answered a present purpose, would have been built; no schools or colleges would have been endowed; no educational facilities would be enjoyed. The thousands of libraries, where the wisdom of the past is garnered up, would never have been

written. The Missionary cause would not have been originated, and the thousand fires which now gleam on the darkness of the pagan world would never have been kindled. Washington had not drawn his sword; Asbury had never threaded our valleys and climbed our mountains; Coke and Judson had not been buried in Indian seas. But these men of towering intellect, and hearts of flame, stood on a prominence, whence they glanced down the tide of time. They saw teeming millions rushing towards the stage of life, and forgetful of self, and of the selfish maxim that "charity begins at home," they went forth to lay the foundation of happiness and salvation for many generations. Upon these foundations, laid deeply and firmly by the hands, and cemented by the tears and blood of our fathers, has been built the goodly edifice of our political and religious institutions. From the wells they digged we have drank refreshing waters. From the vine they planted with care, and watered with tears, we have gathered delicious clusters. The demands of reciprocity as well as of religion, then, are, that, as others have labored and we have entered into their labors, so we, in our turn, should have an eye and a heart upon those who are so soon to occupy our places,—not, however, upon those alone, but upon the wide world, so large a part of which yet lies in wickedness.

This great truth is taught us most impressively by the operations of the natural world. Nearly all these operations are carried on as *means*; few or none of them as *ends*. The heavenly bodies emit their light, and are steered in their courses for the purpose of cheering the footsteps, marking the chronology, and ministering to the wants, not of one, but of many generations. They shone on the original seats of the human race; they shine on us, and they will shine with undiminished brightness upon our children. A large part of the earth's surface is by natural processes increasing its fertility, and depositing in its bosom resources to be developed in generations and ages yet to come. The growth and prostration of a thousand generations of forest trees, is preparing the yet unbroken soil to sustain a thousand generations of men. The very death of vegetation thus becomes the means of life and happiness to succeeding generations of mortals.

Mark the movements of that insect army that builds the coral reef, amid the blue waves of the ocean. It rises, grain by grain, and inch by inch, until it reaches the surface and offers successful resistance to the tides and currents of the deep. And now the lichen wafted on the wings of the wind, is deposited upon the barren rock. Anon, moss and stunted her-

bage cover its surface. A few generations fly by, and I turn my eye upon the recent isle, and what do I behold? A fair field of beauty and fertility lies before me! The palm tree and the magnolia lift up their heads, while underneath is a profusion of herbage, and fruits, and flowers. All is prepared for the reception of the first Robinson Crusoe, whose misfortunes, or whose love of adventure shall conduct him thither.

I am not advocating the theory of the progressive scheme of creation, I have no idea that the planets are the offspring of the sun, flung from her in malice or caprice, or that man has progressed up to his present physical and intellectual condition from his primal state as a baboon or a cabbage. But I do believe that both nature and nature's God look forward to the rising of successive generations and prepare for their coming.

The christian may also learn a lesson of duty from the children of this world, who are in their generation wiser than the children of light. What wise father does not look out for the physical and intellectual training of his children? What sagacious statesman does not provide for the permanency of the political and social institutions of his country, taking into account, the *prospective* condition and wants of unborn millions? We call upon the christians of this generation, in their

higher and holier work, to imitate, and emulate, and outdo such as labor for this life alone.

A desire for posthumous fame is one of the natural aspirations of the human heart, and one of the evidences of our immortality. Whatever is stately and enduring in architecture, from the pyramids, whose summits have from an unpierced antiquity been kissing the clouds, to the mausoleum which was yesterday erected over the grave of a fallen statesman or general; whatever is brilliant in the forum or the field; whatever is masterly as a production of the pencil or the chisel, or sublime as an emanation of the warbling muse,—evinces a desire on the part of the projectors, artists and authors to be remembered and honored in after times. Milton was not a solitary author who has confessed a desire to produce a work which the world will not willingly let die. Every volume filling a place in the alcoves of a thousand libraries, had an author, who, while inditing its pages, fondly said, “my name shall live with this; this shall wed me to immortality.” Many, despairing of being remembered for their virtues or virtuous deeds, and yet unwilling to pass to the oblivion they ought to covet, have preferred to covet a notoriety of infamy, and an immortality of shame, rather than to be utterly forgotten. Nero slew the noble and the excellent of Rome,

that there might be tears shed at his own funeral; and Erastratus burned the Temple of Diana, which had been adorned by the wealth of a hundred kings, that his name might be remembered by coming generations. The tyrant and the incendiary both accomplished their ends. Both are remembered, and their names, coupled with infamy, and loaded with execrations, are passed down from generation to generation. Scarcely higher than this, is the ambition of the heroes of history, whose monument is a pyramid of human bones, once belonging to men whom they prematurely consigned to death. They will veil their ambition under the name of patriotism, and challenge the admiration and homage of the world, for deeds which should cover them with everlasting infamy.

But is there no sphere where this desire for posthumous celebrity may find legitimate exercise? I answer, yes; in the walks of usefulness. Here is a sphere ample enough to employ every faculty and enlist every talent of the most ardent and capacious soul. Genius may have crowned her favorite sons with her richest laurels; military skill and prowess may have culminated in the great Corsican; Mammon may have received and rewarded his most favored worshippers. But there are untraveled heights and unsounded depths, which philanthropy and humanity and piety

may yet explore. And he who consecrates his life to these lofty explorations, shall not only receive the present rewards which are awarded to Piety and usefulness, but they shall be held in everlasting remembrance by those who shall come after him; and better than all, shall secure an honored name and high place in heaven. The question of posthumous charity is one which requires more time than we can here bestow upon it. We think well of the man who crowns a life of active beneficence with noble charities, designed to bless the world when he is sleeping in the dust. But we think very poorly of him who does nothing for the world while he is living in it, under the plea that he purposes to make the cause of benevolence his residuary legatee after he can use and enjoy his wealth no longer. An Astor may have a library, and a Girard a college, to transmit their names to other generations; but these merchant princes might have built and endowed those institutions a score of years before their death, realizing their own ideal, at a vastly diminished outlay of means, and have seen the salutary results of their bounty on multitudes, whom it must now forever fail to benefit. Millions of the wealth of McDonough have already been absorbed in litigation; and yet the cities he designed to adorn and benefit with schools, have not received the first dollar of the miser's gold, while distant relatives, of

whom he knew nothing and for whom he cared nothing in life, seem likely to inherit what executors and lawyers do not absorb. I was recently asked by a man who had large wealth and no children, if I would recommend him to leave a fund, the proceeds of which should go to the support of the gospel, in the place where he resided, after his death. I gave an opinion adverse to such a bequest, and to that opinion I still adhere. There are some things which each generation should do for the next, and there are other things which each generation should do for itself. You have no more right to do the legitimate almsgiving of the next generation than you have to do their praying. It would be a positive injustice to the next generation to deprive them of the privilege of supporting the gospel, providing for their poor and educating their young. We should be the worse, morally, and perhaps pecuniarily, if our fathers had contrived to do all this for us. A religious establishment, supported by revenues independent of the people, is a moral incubus on any nation. It induces a hireling and worldly ministry, and breaks every bond of sympathy between them and the people. So, schools which cost the people nothing, will soon come to be accounted worth nothing, while those will be appreciated which demand effort and money to sustain them. Build churches and school houses as you please, but let

those who minister at the altars of the one, or preside over the exercises of the other, be sustained by those who are to be immediately benefited by them. Nor will the effect of what is thus done for the current generation be confined to that generation. Like restoratives applied to an exhausted soil it will be felt in years and ages to come. Every dollar thus expended, every effort thus put forth, will be like seed which reproduces itself a thousand times ; their words which were intended for a solitary and humble audience will pass down in awakening echoes from age to age.

A direct process then of praising God and his works to the next generation is, by giving personal attention to the moral and religious condition of the generation springing up around us. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that they are to compose the men and the women of the next generation. The moulding of their characters and the determining of their destinies is with you. I spoke of the demands of their moral and spiritual nature, for though I am not regardless of their physical comfort, and mental advancement, yet my persuasion is clear and strong, that the points demanding attention are those I have specified. How many parents are there who regard it as their chief business to train up their children in the way they should go ?

who begin the religious training of their children in lisping infancy, and continue with tireless activity and quenchless zeal, to labor for their salvation? How many strive, through a whole life of toil, to accumulate wealth for their children, but who say in reference to the subject of religion "I leave them to judge for themselves." Forgetful of the fact that their native tendencies are evil, and that the influences which surround them are also evil, they abandon them to those influences, that is, to certain destruction. Not unlike this would be the folly of the man who should lay out a flower garden in spring expecting soon to see the modest violet peep forth, and the magnificent magnolia lift up its head; and after leaving it to its native tenderness for the season, return in autumn and profess to be greatly surprised that no flowers or fruit appeared, while burdocks and thistles abounded.

This is a result the wise man would have foreseen, and to have prevented it he would have applied himself in early spring time to eradicate the weeds and cultivate the flowers. I repeat it, the formation of the morals and hearts of the next generation is with the present. It is for ministers and parents, and Sabbath School teachers, and all who are brought into contact with youthful hearts, to do this great work. Let this generation speak emphatically and effectually to the

next, of the works of the Lord. You cannot do this by secularizing their souls, and teaching them that wealth is the "be all and end all" of life. You cannot do this by permitting them to tread the mazes of worldly folly and fashionable vice. You cannot do it by introducing them into vicious society, or what is almost equally pernicious, furnishing them with evil books. But you may do it by the contrary process. By talking with them of God, His works, His word, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up. By bringing them to the house of God, not only, when his word is preached, but when prayer is offered, and when social worship is carried on. Let them witness the solicitude of the Christian as it develops itself in prayers and tears. Lead them to the altar of prayer. Let the baptismal dew, which was sprinkled on their brows by ministerial hands, prefigure their more frequent baptism with parental tears. I have not mentioned the Sabbath School, not because I depreciate its utility, but because I would not have an institution which has never claimed a Divine warrant for itself, supercede agencies of God's own appointment. No man thinks more highly than I do of efficient, well-conducted Sabbath Schools. I yield to none in my appreciation of them ; nor (to the extent

of my capacity and opportunities,) in efforts for their prosperity and success. But if the effect of them is to induce the impression that they release parents from one of their responsibilities, then even Sabbath Schools may cease to be a blessing. These institutions are established only in the more populous and favored portions of the country, and in many places are in operation only a part of the year. If they were universally established and constantly maintained, and efficiently carried on, they could never take a higher rank than an auxilliary to parental discipline and instruction. The Sabbath School teacher will labor in vain if his labors are not seconded at the table and the fireside. Bible and catechetical instruction should be introduced into the daily arrangements of domestic life, and by every lawful means the minds of our children should be engaged upon the high themes which relate to duty and eternity. I need not specify these processes more minutely. Parental and Christian love will find them out, and they cannot be employed in vain. In answer to your prayers, and as a result of your labors, God will give you the souls of your children. And thus your virtues, and your usefulness, will be transmitted like your name and your blood to rising generations. And they, in their turn, will pass the golden heir-loom to those who will come after them. It is easy to see how Sabbath Schools

may conserve these precious interests and secure these great results. If not *established* for these definite ends, they are *employed*, in our own country at least, mainly to promote them. The child is taken at that opportune period, when the mind is flexible, before opinions have been formed, and habits contracted which would interfere with subsequent efforts to reclaim and save him. Faith in the statements of others is natural to childhood ; hence it is easy for such a one to comply with the great condition of salvation. The heart of childhood is neither world-hardened nor gospel-hardened. It is not pre-occupied with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of life ; nor has it been educated by long familiarity with, and rejection of the claims of the law of God. Taking the heart at this inviting stage, it brings it into contact with the most elevating truths, points it to the brightest destinies, and plies it with the loftiest motives. Can such discipline, can such efforts fail.

It is only by slow processes that the world can grow wiser or better. This reason is obvious. Each generation begins where the preceding began. It may be furnished with greater facilities, but it has at the outset no nobler faculties, no loftier virtues. With his first breath the infant commences a terrible and lifelong struggle with ignorance and depravity. You

may transmit wealth and titles to your children, but knowledge and virtue

——“Are gained not by surprise,
He that would win must labor for the prize.”

And with few and unimportant exceptions, there is no distinction in the intellectual and moral endowments and capacities of these infant immortals. That cherub son of yours, fond father, is no wiser and apart from influences which will surround him, is capable of becoming no wiser than the son of a Hottentot. That lovely daughter of yours, Christian mother, possesses the same germs of depravity, and the same terrible bias to sin which marks the offspring of the Bedouin and the Choctaw. If learning ever expands its mind, if grace ever warms its heart, if it is ever distinguished from the generation of them that know not God, never forget that its superiority will be the result of your labor, and of your representatives. Leave the children of this generation under savage discipline and they will grow up savages, as ignorant, as degraded, as brutal as their preceptors. But though each generation must find the starting point of its eventful race far back in the regions of profound mental and moral darkness, yet you may erect beacons and kindle lights along their track, which will greatly facilitate their improvement and multiply the probabilities of

their salvation. A *poet* says that the evil that men do lives after them, the good is buried with their bones; but a *prophet* affirms that the righteous will be held in everlasting remembrance. Not only their names but their influence shall survive them. Generations to come shall reverently speak their names and bless their memory.

But besides addressing oral instruction and remonstrances to the heart of children, he who aims to benefit and save coming generations, will not neglect another mighty agency of which he may avail himself. I mean the presentation of truth to the understanding and heart through the medium of the eye. The principal means by which this is done is the multiplication and diffusion of religious literature. Words are breath and are soon forgotten; but when put into the permanent form of books they may be indefinitely multiplied and perpetuated. The author speaks not to a solitary auditor, nor to a single generation. If his production be a worthy one the world will not willingly let it die. The press will invest his thoughts with a kind of ubiquity, and a kind of immortality. The desire of authorship, if prompted by a desire to be useful, is highly laudable. Job, the earliest of the patriarchs, expressed an earnest wish that his words and history might be transmitted to coming times.

“Oh that my words were now written,” he exclaims, “that they were printed in a book.” Well, his wish has been granted. His words *have been printed in a book*. The faith of millions has been strengthened, and their souls nerved up in trial, as they have read the story of his conflict and victory. Not Job alone, but the vast array of moral heroes, whose names are recorded in sacred story, and the still more extended list outside the sacred canons, have spoken through their works to us upon whom the ends of the world are come. Philosophers and sages thus become my instructors. Sacred poets warble for me their sweetest songs. The great masters of eloquence pour around me the light and beauty of their thoughts. From the entire past, floods of oil and waves of incense are poured from golden urns and censers upon this generation. All that has been great in conception, deep in experience, elevated in devotion, and sublime in expression, is bequeathed to me and to my children. Wesley and Watson preach to me; Watts and Montgomery sing for me; Fletcher builds up my faith, and Carvosso comes and rehearses the efficacy of faith in God. Being dead they yet speak, and will continue to speak until their voice is lost in the louder thunders which proclaim the close of time. In this way may one generation emphatically speak to the next, of the works of the Lord, especially His works of providence

and grace. None of these voices, however, fall on the ear of him who never reads. They are all around him speaking words of love and instruction but he hears them not. "He is driven from the porch of science. He bids a long adieu to those intimate ones, poets, philosophers, and teachers. He sees no record of sympathies that bind him in communion with the good. He is thrust from the feet of Him who spake as never man spake. He lives as an Esquimaux, in lethargy, and dies like a Mohawk, in ignorance." In this way the present generation is speaking emphatically and effectually to the next. A thousand presses are throwing off their periodicals and their volumes, very many of which are invaluable, and such as the world will not let die. By spreading these and bringing them into contact with the juvenile minds of the land, you speak to coming ages. You swell the tide of sanctified literature and holy influence, which will last as long as time.

At the close of a Conference year, each one of you who are ministers will have preached, at a very moderate estimate, one hundred sermons. During the same time you may have put into circulation one hundred religious books. Now of those sermons, how many fell on inattentive ears and unaffected hearts, to begin with? How many were forgotten before the year was gone? How many will be like seed cast by

the way side, or upon a rock, or amid thorns? But a different result may follow the diffusion of those volumes of experimental and practical religion. They will meet the eye and affect the heart of more than one generation. After you have passed away from sight and from memory they will remain, and be like bread cast upon the waters, to be gathered after many days.

At this point, affecting memories gather around me. Twenty-five years ago, I was a member of this Sabbath School. I remember with the freshness of yesterday, many who were its officers and teachers. A Caswell, a Peck, a Major, a Brown, have passed away, but I seem still to hear their familiar voices. Upon my leaving the school, the former of these honored men presented me a little book, which I long retained and frequently read. I have never doubted but that it had much to do in making me a Christian. Another volume, read a little later, settled forever my denominational preferences, and left no room to doubt where the truth lay, between Arminian and Calvinistic theology.

I spoke the name of Rev. James Major. I remember at a period later than that just referred to, holding consultations with him, and putting our dollars together to enlarge our library. You all know that his dying thoughts were on this Sabbath school. Disease

smote him while in the Republic of Mexico, near the bloody field of Buena Vista. While on his death bed he remembered Manlius; he remembered this Sabbath school and its library. He took his pencil and with a faltering hand wrote, "Due Manlius Sabbath school \$500." His noble wife honored his draft, and his beneficence has for years accomplished the double purpose of furnishing a home for your minister, and amply providing for every want of your school.

Other reminiscences gather around me. The familiar faces of Seymour, and Young, and Crowel rise up before me. But they have passed to other spheres, and for aught I know to their home in the skies. Many who then manned this school, having served their generation, by the will of God have fallen asleep. But their familiar voices still seem sounding in my ear. Personally they are praising God in heaven, but you may so live, so speak, so pray, and so give, that generations to come shall rise up and call you blessed.

A belief has long prevailed in the church, that as God was six days in creating the world and its furniture and then brought on a peaceful Sabbath, so when six thousand years shall be completed the seventh shall be one great millennial Sabbath, when the nations shall walk in the light of Jehovah's countenance, when ambition shall break its useless sword, war lay by its crimson attire, and a redeemed world walk in

holiness, and brotherhood, and love. Time will demonstrate the truth or falsity of this ancient hypothesis. Whether true or false, neither your eyes nor mine will see that day. But you may leave some footprints in the sands of time, to tell to generations to come that you have lived. Oh! live for the future! Live well! Send your voice and your influence down to the teeming millions of the future, and as the renovated Phoenix rises and sings from the ashes of its predecessor, and as the richest flowers spring up from the brow of the grave, so shall your usefulness reproduce itself again and again, through all coming time. The worldly-minded man will call you a fool, the votary of pleasure will regard you as a cynic, but God will approve your labor of love, and future generations will rise up to call you blessed. And when you are translated to your peaceful home in heaven, you may be permitted to look down upon plenteous harvests, which have sprung from seed scattered by your hand. For he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him.

SERMON II.

CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

Luke xvi : 5.—“How much owest thou unto my Lord?”

If that precept of the great apostle “owe no man any thing” applies to pecuniary transactions at all, it cannot be understood in its most general and absolute sense ; for thus understood, it would nearly amount to a prohibition of all business, especially in commercial and mercantile communities. In the transaction of business there will frequently remain a balance due from one individual to another ; and even the contraction of debt to be paid at a future specified period is not incompatible with the principles of reciprocity, nor with the word of God. But it is yet possible, nay it is indispensable, for the christian to obey the spirit of the apostolic precept and “owe no man anything.” When the practice prevails in a community of allowing an account to run up upon the books of the merchant or mechanic, and where there are specified times of settlement agreed upon or understood between the parties, until such a period has come and passed I cannot be looked upon in the light of a debtor, or called upon for the payment without a viola-

tion of those conventional arrangements which exist in the community. But when the designated or appointed period for the settlement of such accounts arrives and is suffered to pass without their satisfactory adjustment, then the apostle's precept is violated and guilt incurred.

Again, should I give my note or bond payable at a future day, I cannot be regarded as a legal debtor or held responsible for payment until the specified day arrives. But should that day pass and find me delinquent, I have violated a sacred promise, disappointed my creditor, and perhaps set in operation a train of disappointments seriously affecting and injuring many individuals. These are principles which I suppose are understood, admitted, and acted on by all who claim the character of punctual upright men.

But the inquiry I have to make does not relate to these pecuniary matters between man and man. I do not enquire "how much owest thou to thy banker, thy merchant or thy mechanic?" but "how much owest thou to thy Lord?" How stands thy account with thy Maker? And when I inquire how much are you indebted to God, I speak in a strict mercantile sense. Most men will admit that they owe to God, their services, their affections, their hearts, and perhaps some portion of their time, but do not con-

cede that they owe him any *money*. They do not understand how they have come under an obligation to God which is to be met in *cash*. That some have come to understand this idea and are seeking to act upon it, we gratefully admit; that others have not learned it all, or have learned it imperfectly will not admit of doubt. Speak to them in general terms of their obligations to God, of his claims upon them and upon all that belong to them, and you will find no difficulty in gaining their assent to your premises; but when you proceed to draw your conclusion, present your claims and demand payment, in how many instances is the draft dishonored, and while every other claimant is satisfied, and every other demand cancelled, the cause of God, after waiting long and urging its claims vehemently at the court of conscience, is courteously dismissed with a penny and a promise, or turned unceremoniously into the streets. In speaking of the debt you owe to God, its reality, its amount, and the time and manner of payment will demand attention.

There is then an actual debt due from you to God, and a debt which can be discharged only in money or its equivalent. This proposition will demand both explanation and proof. The debt though due to God is not of course to be paid to him *directly*, but is to be applied to certain purposes which he has desig-

nated. This is no novelty, no deviation from established business principles and habits among men. Monies due to our Government are usually applied to governmental purposes, and are paid over for internal improvements, or for the support of those engaged in the service of the state. Now God is the great Governor of the Universe. He has commenced and is carrying forward enterprises for the benefit of this alienated province. He is aiming to recover earth from its moral sterility, to make its wilderness and its solitary places glad, and its deserts to rejoice and blossom like the rose. He is constructing channels by which to carry happiness to the hearts of men, and thoroughfares on which earth's teeming millions may travel to the skies.

Now on the system which God has adopted, all this cannot be done without money. The agents exclusively devoted to the work must be sustained. Having left the usual tracks of industry and trade by which a competency is secured, they have the promise that they, and those depending upon them, shall be provided for by Him in whose service they are engaged. Then Bibles are wanted with which to flood the world. religious tracts like leaves from the tree of life, should be sprinkled over the nations. Sanctuaries must be erected and furnished. Bethel ships, and sailor's homes must dot our seaboard as asylums for

the friendless sons of the ocean. The poor, the sick, the blind, the deaf, the orphan and the slave, all have their peculiar and pressing demands. It is *idle* to say that these interests can be sustained without money ; it is *wicked* to say then let them perish ; and it is a despicable method of shuffling off responsibility to say they must be sustained by other hands than mine. Equally idle is it to affirm that money offered in a right spirit and applied in a proper manner possesses no adaptation to secure the contemplated end. Money it has been said given to benevolent objects at a distance, fritters away on its journey like rivers which lose themselves in the sands of the desert. This, however, will not be affirmed or believed by those who will examine the process of their appropriation and expenditure. Such are our facilities for observation that every rill of benevolence can be traced from its fountain to its termination ; and the amount of its fertilizing properties can be correctly estimated by the additional beauty and greenness of that spot in the garden of the Lord where its waters are discharged.

But it is demanded " If money is essential to carry out the purposes of Christian benevolence, why has not God provided, in some way " a fund for this especial purpose ?" I answer, He has provided a copious and abundant fund, sufficient to carry out every one of His great designs of mercy ; but this

must needs be committed to the guardianship of human agents ; and these agents it is quite conceivable may be unfaithful to their trust, so that His treasures may be withheld from their designed use, diverted from their appropriate channel, and applied to purposes their great Proprietor never intended. This, to be sure, implies a grievous wrong on the part of such agents ; but alas ! such wrongs have become fearfully common in this world of ours. Defalcations on the part of government officers and agents, and infidelity to trusts of a most sacred character, are no novelties in the history of sinful men. And is it to be supposed that men, not having the fear of God before their eyes, and seeing no visible hand stretched out to inflict a speedy retribution, will hesitate to appropriate to their own use the possessions he entrusted to them for a far different purpose. Strange it may be, but true it is, that "men will rob God," and rob him by withholding the tithes and the offerings which His cause demands.

But we pass to the proof of the proposition that we are indebted to God !

I. In the first place the claim of God upon us is founded in *justice*. On the principles of common honesty we are bound to discharge it. I hold it as an incontrovertible truth that the proprietorship of all

wealth vests in God. Trace the history of that piece of gold on which is blazoned the soaring eagle, and which you call your own. Once it sparkled in the mine or lay concealed beneath strata of rocks in the mountain side. When God built the stories of the heavens, and laid the deep foundations of the earth, he ribbed the earth with gold. He lit the flaming mine and planted diamonds in their native beds. Now *when* did God relinquish his claim upon these treasures? When did he cease to be the proprietor of the silver and the gold? Was it when man dug it from its native bed, cast it into his crucible, and stamped upon it his image and superscription? This it may be said makes man at least a partner in its ownership. He has excavated, refined, and furbished it; and this increased value he has put upon it is surely His. This would be admitted had not God the same ownership in the man that he has in the gold. But it so happens that the man himself with all his skill, and his strength, and his capacity, belongs to God. Who made man to know more than the beasts of the field, to whom a rock of gold and a rock of granite are equally valueless?

The *manner* in which God puts us in possession of his goods cannot affect His right in them, or his control over them. To one, He may entrust them in the

form of actual or representative wealth, to another in the form of health and strength, and to another in the form of business habits; and it is certainly a matter of small moment whether he gives me wealth already produced, or whether he gives me capacity to acquire it. In both cases it is *His*, and in both cases I am His steward; and if in any hour of self-complacency I look abroad, like Nebuchadnezzar on his capital, and say, "my hand hath gotten me all this," God answers in emphatic rebuke — "Forgettest thou Him who gave thee power to get wealth?"

Now, if that is a debt of justice for which I have received an equivalent, and one which I am bound to discharge, then are God's claims on me most righteous, and for me to refuse to admit them, is to take upon myself the awful responsibility of mis-appropriating, nay, of *self*-appropriating, my Master's goods.

2. But the debt we owe to God is one of gratitude as well as Justice. We all recognize the principle that where justice has no legal claim, gratitude, nevertheless, may have claims. On the principles of justice, as usually understood, a child may owe his father nothing — on the principle of gratitude, he owes him everything. Gratitude always springs up in the heart of every beneficiary who is not dead to every right moral feeling; and who of us are not beneficiaries on the munificence of Heaven? If we

were to estimate the number of the Divine benefactions, who of us must not say "they are more in number than the hairs upon our head." Now gratitude always awakens a desire to please and serve our benefactor; and when that benefactor is God, it prompts us to enquire with David — "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?" Thus, when he had gathered the treasures of his kingdom together, and dedicated them to God, he felt that the offering was justly due in consideration of mercies received from Him: "Who am I, and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this manner, for all things are of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

But there are higher claims upon *our* gratitude, who see the light and share the benefits of the remedial dispensation — "*Ye* know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for our sakes He became poor that we, through His poverty, might become rich." Oh! Christian, if ever thy heart becomes congealed with selfishness, bring it out of the fogs and icebergs of a cold, calculating world, and thaw it, melt it, at the foot of the cross.

3. This debt is also due to benevolence; or, in other words, benevolence puts in a claim that entirely accords with that of justice and gratitude; justice says, "pay to God that thou owest, *because it is His*

due": gratitude says, "pay it, *because He hath dealt bountifully with thee*": benevolence says, "pay it, *because of the good it will accomplish for others*". God asks our money for a specific purpose. With it He would staunch the bleeding heart of the world, and raise that world to Heaven. Go and look out upon this smitten planet; survey the extent, sound the depths, and analyze the bitterness of this ocean of woe, and then let us ask, will we not cast into it whatever may have a tendency to purify and sweeten it, even to the last fraction which rigid economy and self-denial can spare? Will we not emulate the generous feelings of Araunah, who, when an offering was wanted to arrest the sword of the angel, which had already cast down many ten thousands of Israel, offered his oxen for a burnt offering, their implements for fuel, and his threshing floor for an altar?—"All these did Araunah as a peace offering to the Lord." Imitate his example, ye Christian Araunahs, and God may see the smoke of your sacrifice and stay His hand. Thus, by the three-fold bond of justice, gratitude and benevolence, does God strengthen His claim, not only upon our affections and our services, but upon our money and our possessions.

II. The question now returns to us, *how much* owest thou to thy Lord?" What is the amount of your indebtedness to God? Before I answer this question

directly, I must premise that you all owe Him something. His demands against some of you may be very small. If some of you do *anything* for the cause of God, you probably do your proportion; but I cannot believe that any individual, who is not himself an object of charity, is so near the point of absolute indigence as to be justifiable in doing nothing for the cause of God and benevolence. You may, if you please, condemn Christ for not rebuking and restraining the widow who cast two mites into the offerings of God, although it was all she had, even all her living; but so far from rebuking, he commended her. You may condemn Elisha for accepting the hospitality of the widow of Sarepta in the time of the famine; but revelation has embalmed her memory for the imitation and encouragement of God's poor, every where. If you cannot give the two mites of the widow, give one, and the blessings of the widow's God will be upon you. If you have but a handful of meal in your barrel and a spoonful of oil in your cruse, "make a little cake thereof first for the Lord, and he will not suffer thy little store to become exhausted until he shall visit the land with plenty." From the point which thus approaches absolute want, the debt we owe to God steadily enlarges, not in sacredness, but magnitude. The measure of the Divine requirement is according to what a man hath, and not according.

to what he hath not. It proportions itself to every man's ability, of which he alone, acting in the fear of God and in the light of eternity, must judge.

We have said that the claims of God are enforced by the three-fold consideration of justice, gratitude and benevolence: Let, then, the question, "*How much* owest thou", be addressed to those virtues respectively; and let benevolence answer first. She inquires, how much is *needed*—she makes the world's necessities the measure of her contributions—she points to the wide circumference filled with wretchedness, over which the Savior wept, to lessen which he lived, to terminate which he died—she bids you look until your eye moistens with sympathy and your heart bursts with commiseration, and then bids you determine for yourself *how much* you will do for God and humanity. Very different is the process of parsimoniousness in dealing with the matter—it sees no opportunity of doing good, because it seeks none, and closes its eyes on such as force themselves upon its notice—it hears no cry of want, because it has adders' ears, or because it misinterprets the wailings of the destitute and the cry of the prisoner into needless appeals to sympathy, or the childish ebullitions of imaginary distress. The greater proportion of cases which ask his sympathizing tear and alleviating hand are promptly dismissed, as bearing upon their surface

the marks of imposture or exaggeration ; or, because in some similar case, somewhere in the indefinite past, the poor man was made the victim of a deception !—The discovery of that deception which was practiced upon him has been of great service to him ; it has saved his heart from many a sympathizing pang, and possibly his pocket from the loss of many a penny !—it is a standing defence of avarice — a stereotyped argument against benevolence !

Then, when the application is so dissimilar that no use can be made of this invaluable precedent—when the case must be taken into consideration and examined on its independent merits, it is interesting to watch the analysis to which the claim is subjected. Never did anatomist proceed to the dissection of a subject with nicer skill or more untrembling hand than this small specimen of a philanthropist to the examination of every claim upon his charity. He does not hesitate,

“ When at the door
A starving brother stands,
To ask the cause which made him poor,
Or why he help demands.”

The palpitating heart must consent to be probed and have its wounds opened afresh, before he can dispense a balm. And when the case is not one of individual distress, but one of world-wide benevolence and world-wide notoriety, too, it must still be scrutinized, in hope of finding something in the object itself,

or something in the plan of its workings, which would authorize a rejection of the appeal. In most cases he succeeds, and his possessions and his conscience are at peace. Oh! a peace how deceitful! His treasures grow moth-eaten, his gold becomes cankered, and the rust of it will eat his flesh, as if it were fire. His conscience, too, which was so nearly asleep that the gentlest opiate could throw it into its usual profound slumber, will yet rouse up, like the lion from his lair, and thunder its rebuke in his ears forever. And then, when the case is so obviously right that it must be admitted, the next curious thing in this process, is to see him determine the amount he will appropriate to it; and here the inquiry is not how much can I give, but how little will answer my conscience and meet the lowest expectations of those whom I desire to please? Thus pence are doled out where pounds should be bestowed; mites are given where talents are demanded. It will not satisfy a well-trained conscience to be able to say, "I have done something"; but its demands will only be met when we say, "I have done my duty"; or, as a venerable minister recently said, "I have given to God all that belonged to Him these forty years."

2. From this digression we return to ask gratitude to define to us the magnitude of the Divine claims upon us. She will propose to gradnate her offerings

according to what she has received. If this rule be adopted we shall bring no despicable gift to the altar. Enumerate the mercies which have crowned thy life. Fathom the ocean of love which moves in the bosom of Diety towards thee. Estimate the greatness of the love wherewith the Savior loved you. And then enquire what will I do in the cause of a Savior who has done and suffered so much for me? And the answer is, "all I *can* bestow is an offering too poor to express the depth of my gratitude and love." As the wise men of the East brought forth their choicest treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh, to bequeath to an infant Savior, so had I the wealth of the world to offer, I would lay it all at my Savior's feet. Ingratitude dwells not on what has been given, but on what has been withheld. Instead of finding in every thing reasons for giving, she finds everywhere reasons for withholding. Every appeal to her benevolence makes the whole troop of her reverses and adversities pass like a haggard procession through the mind; and each in turn breathes a chilling blast upon the germs of rising charities; and each turns another bolt upon the heart disposed to open. Blessings being common events are soon forgotten; misfortunes occurring only at long intervals are ever remembered and ever on hand when they can be turned to account. I know of a means by which you may ascertain all your

neighbors' poverty, their former losses and sickness, their large families and poor relations, and in short, a general history of all that has been unpropitious in their lives. All this will generally be unfolded to you, more or less in detail, if you circulate a subscription for almost any benevolent object through a neighborhood. Pity that the same occasion would not rather call forth narrations of Divine goodness, and instances of good fortune in worldly enterprises. Pity they do not remind us of smiling skies and fruitful fields. Pity especially that they do not carry us with emotions of joy and kindling gratitude to the foot of the cross where our benevolent spirits found peace, and then along the pathway of a natural and spiritual life crowned with Divine goodness.

3. After what has been said, I need hardly wait to hear what justice will bid me do. Benevolence and gratitude going before have inscribed holiness to the Lord upon all I possess. But justice inquires what hast thou that thou hast not received of God, and why we should hold and use it as though we were its irresponsible proprietors? Her requirement is, after deducting an economical support for ourselves and families, with an amount sufficient to carry on our business whatever it is, that the entire balance be it more or be it less, should be stamped with the name of God its rightful owner, and sacredly devoted to His ser-

vice. Not that I would teach that all this balance should be paid over at once, or all given to one object, but it should be regarded as devoted, and subject to the order of its great proprietor.

III. In regard to the manner of discharging this debt I have two things to observe. Let it be done systematically and conscientiously. In paying for a farm, or in adjusting the accounts of a merchant, the punctual business man will aim to make his payments at the time they are due, and it is with him a matter of conscience so to do. The wrong of postponement may not be equal to the wrong of utter repudiation, but it is still a wrong, and one which the upright man will not willingly perpetrate. Systematic giving (or *paying* as we have chosen to term it,) is a subject too broad to be introduced here in its amplitude; but it must embrace the ideas of amount to be paid, objects to which and times when it shall be paid. If we are guided in this matter by precedents which are entitled to high consideration, if not to be viewed in the light of absolute authority, *one tenth* of our entire income will be as little as will satisfy the conscience of the Christian or the claims of the law of God. The language of the Patriarchs was "Of all that thou shalt give me, the tenth shall surely be the Lord's." This among the Jews was *law* and a law which it might be difficult to prove has ever been repealed, and which

few Christians would attempt to show has been superseded by a law *lower* in its requirements. The Jewish religion was not a system of propagandism; Christianity *is*. Judaism said to the nations "Come to us"; Christianity says to its heralds "go ye into all the world." The representatives of Judaism were the stationary seraphs that hovered over the mercy seat; while Christianity is symbolized by the angel flying through the midst of heaven preaching the everlasting gospel to the inhabitants of the earth. Will any then affirm that Judaism made higher requirements of its votaries than Christianity, which is founded in benevolence and which aims at the conquest of the world to Christ? But it would be well if the Christian world were brought practically up even to the standard of Jewish benevolence. A thousand new springs of charity would burst forth from hearts now sealed, and springs would swell into copious fountains, and fountains expand into broad rivers and streams. Let us seek to ascertain what, by the workings of this rule, we should give annually to the cause of benevolence. Take just the case of the poor man who has no capital but his hands and whose means of livelihood are his daily toil. If there are three hundred laboring days in the year, according to this rule the avails of thirty days labor should be consecrated to the Lord. If there are instances, as it is entirely

conceivable there may be, where some subtractions should be made from this sum, it is certain also that the instances are common in which there must be large, very large additions to it. It is not common that daily labor is a man's only resource; and it is common to find instances where this constitutes only a small part of one's income; and in such instances the tenth of his receipts from all other sources must be added to that which is devoted from his labor. But as I have intimated the Christian should look upon such rules rather as a standard beneath which he must not fall, than one beyond which he must not go.

2. Having determined the *amount* to be devoted to charity, the next thing is to settle upon the *objects* to which it should be devoted. These have been suggested. The poor at our own doors must not be forgotten. The Gospel must be sustained at home, and in heathen lands. Those who cannot be reached by other agencies must be supplied with the productions of a sanctified press. The Sunday School must be sustained and the Bible put in the hands of all who have it not. These are the principal demands which the present age makes upon our charity; and they are all, but different agencies for the accomplishment of the same result, to benefit and save men, and thus to glorify our Father in Heaven.

The apostle enjoined it upon the christians of his

time to lay by sums of money weekly for benevolent purposes. Some Biblical critics are of the opinion that this was not designed as a temporary but as a permanent rule of christian duty, and should be literally followed ; as much so indeed as any injunction given by the same authority. We have not time to examine this point at length, but one thing is clear that whether rendered weekly, quarterly, or annually, our offerings should be made regularly or in many cases they will be neglected altogether. Let then an individual who is disposed to treat this matter conscientiously speak thus with himself : “ I have so much for charity. So much of it I must distribute among the poor. So much must go to sustain the gospel at home. So much for those who have spent their lives in the ministry and are now the Beneficiaries of the Church. So much for the Missionary, Bible, Tract and Sunday School causes Do not be startled at the multiplicity of the objects. I have usually observed that those who excuse themselves from giving on the ground that there are so many calls, are the persons who treat each of these calls cavalierly and pass by on the other side. There is more danger of our dying from repletion than depletion ; more danger that at the judgment we be found the holder of treasures for which we can give no good account, than that we

have transcended the limits of our duty in bestowing them. Where an individual gives systematically it is no cross, no hardship to give. It is hard not to give. He cannot deny himself *this* luxury though he should deny himself many *other* luxuries. He feels that it is more blessed to give than to receive. But the man who gives spasmodically, occasionally, and grudgingly, feels none of this blessedness. He is not actuated by the true and proper principle of benevolence, and he loses consequently the pleasures it procures. Deprive an individual accustomed to give systematically of the appropriate opportunities, and you have thrown him out of the line both of his duties and his enjoyments. If detained from the sanctuary when collections for benevolent purposes are made, he will delight to forward them by another's hand. If the subscription papers are not presented to him, so far from regarding it as a fortunate oversight which excuses him from all responsibility, he searches them up, enters his name and pays what he owes into the treasury of the Lord, estimating that debt not by the scanty rule of human penuriousness, but by the enlarged standard of Christian beneficence. It may often happen to a conscientious man, who has been deprived of his ordinary opportunity of giving, that he finds himself possessed of funds to which he feels that he has no title. He feels that he should have sur-

rendered the proprietorship and guardianship of this money to other hands. Legitimately held it might be desirable and conducive to happiness, but held as it is, it is a perplexity and an annoyance; and this is true whether it is held in the form of cash, or whether it has passed into the aggregate of his possessions. Estimates have often been made of what amounts would be raised for benevolent purposes on the supposition that each member of the church should give a particular sum. For instance the effort has been made to secure a penny a week from each member of the M. E. Church for the missionary cause. This would give to the treasury \$350,000 per annum, a sum to which we have never yet approximated. Now let this system be adopted and carried out, and a full treasury would from its very overflowings, deluge the world with light and salvation. Last year we sought to raise 14 cts. a member for our superannuated ministers and although most charges fell greatly short of the aggregate yet we were able to do vastly better than in former years when we set no such standard. I close with a few reflections:

1. Benevolence brings its own reward. It does so in this life. No man is poorer for giving to the cause of God. Bunyan says:

“There was a man the people called him mad,
The more he gave away the more he had.”

Nor was this a singular case. Anciently there was an Obed-Edom who took upon himself the entire support of the ark of God, and the Lord blessed Obed Edom and all his household. There was a Zacheus, who offered the half of his goods to feed the poor, and the approving Saviour exclaimed to-day is salvation come to thy house. There was a Cornelius, who gave much alms to the people and an angel informed him that they had gone up as a memorial before God. And many a modern philanthropist, like Cobb and Lawrence of Boston, Champion of Rochester, and Wilkes, a citizen of the world, has proved that there is that scatterth and yet increaseth, while many a covetous Achan, and many a churlish Nabul, and many a penurious Ananias and Sapphira, have found that withholding more than is meet tendeth to poverty and ruin. Men sometimes urge as a reason for doing little or nothing in the cause of benevolence, the blight of their harvests, or the temporal losses they have sustained, not reflecting that these may be the frowns of God on their avarice and that a return to the principles and practices of beneficence will be the most likely way to secure for themselves the returning smiles of Providence. In the days of Malichi, the last of the prophets, God complains that his people had robbed him and in answer to their astonished inquiry "wherein"? He replies, "In tithes

and offerings." They had withheld their contributions from the cause of God; therefore they were cursed with a curse even the whole nation. They were exhorted to bring their tithes and offerings into God's storehouse and prove him therewith. Yet how often does adversity have a directly contrary result. Instead of retrenchment and self-denial their subscriptions to the cause of benevolence must be cut down, their religious paper must be discontinued, and it is well if religion itself is not given up as too costly to be retained. To him who believes in the providence of God I need not point out the folly of this course. How easy for Him to make your harvests plenty, and to cause streams of prosperity to roll up around you. Be benevolent, and God shall answer the heavens, and the heavens shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the corn and the wine, and the corn and the wine shall answer Jesreel. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

2. The remembrance of a life of heavenly charities will sweeten the cup of death. Oh how hard for a worldly minded man to die and leave all on which his heart is set." "My Lord I" said Wesley to a nobleman who was pointing out to him his large estates,

“these are the things which make dying hard.” But the good steward in dying, leaves the responsibilities and toils of his earthy mission and goes to enjoy the treasures he has laid up in heaven.

3. The mission of benevolence is to realize the blissful vision of prophecy and accelerate the triumphs of the cross. Let the superfluous wealth of the church be turned into the channels of benevolence, and earth soon rising from its winter state shall be clothed in vernal beauty. Evergreens shall spring from the rocks, streams shall break out in the desert, and the voice of a ransomed world shall go up to heaven.

SERMON III

INSTRUCTING CHILDREN IN THE SCRIPTURES.

II Timothy, iii: 15.—“From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

The word “Scriptures,” is said to be derived from the Latin word “scribo,” which signifies “to write.” When used in its most extensive signification it means “writings” or manuscripts in general. In our text it evidently refers to those parts of the Bible then existing, and which had been so faithfully and profitably

perused by young Timothy. That it is applicable also to the writings of the New Testament is evident from the words of Peter, who, speaking of the epistles of Paul, says, "In which are many things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do, also *the other scriptures* to their own destruction." The word now invariably signifies the Holy Bible the Book of God, of which Paul makes two affirmations :

- I. That they are able to make men wise unto salvation.
- II. That Timothy had known them from a child.
From which we infer,
- III. That children should be early instructed in them.

The sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, as a rule of faith and practice in all things essential to salvation, is a question of infinite moment ; for if their insufficiency can be maintained, the question returns, what additional light is needful ? If the Scriptures be not a sufficient rule, what is ? If driven from the firm ground on which we have planted all our hopes, to whom and to what shall we betake ourselves ? To the fathers, to tradition, to the decrees of popes and councils, say the Roman Catholics. Very well, we reply, we have no objection to go to the fathers and tradition, provided we are fairly unmoored from our position

that the Scriptures are sufficient; for it matters little what course we steer when our chart is gone, nor upon what rock we split when we are drifting in a sea where we shall certainly founder. But what disposition is to be made of our text meanwhile? That affirms that the Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, and the affirmation will stand like an ocean rock, though a thousand waves may beat against it, and the book in reference to which it is uttered, will still maintain its Alp-like pre-eminence, though a thousand little hills should claim to be of equal altitude. That the Scriptures were given for the purpose of making men wise unto salvation is certain. The prophets who have spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, and the holy men to whom the Holy Ghost dictated the Scriptures, have not attempted to instruct us in philosophy, but only in the science of salvation; not in the wisdom of this world, but in the manner in which we may escape the wrath to come. That God has not failed to embody all necessary information in them we prove "*a priori*," from his attributes, and "*a posteriori*" from the volume itself. God knew the depth into which we had fallen. He was acquainted with the profundity of our ignorance, and the magnitude of our guilt. He knew what light and what assistance we required. With a full knowledge of our ailments, He undertook our moral recovery, and

if the undertaking failed, it cannot be for lack of provisions made or light imparted. The Scriptures furnish us with explicit information upon the character of God, the nature, ground and extent of His claims upon us, and the means of securing His favor. This information is ample, extending to every point of religious duty. It is explicit, leaving no room for conjecture as to its import. It is authentic, bearing the stamp of God upon it. Authoritative, leaving none at liberty to evade it, and *final*, pronouncing a word upon any who presume to add thereto. Indeed, nothing can be more absurd than to support a revelation from God by the sayings and traditions of men. It is like propping up the Andes with a rush, or fortifying the rock of Gibraltar with a rampart of straw. But the great evil is not that no positive support is thus given to Revelation, but that its authority is thus greatly diminished. If men are taught to rely upon the Scriptures in connection with human tradition, the great danger is that they will divide their confidence when they agree, and misplace it when they disagree. In the first instance, they give to man half that is due to God, and in the second they will be in danger of making their faith stand entirely in the wisdom of man and not in the power of God. It is this leaning upon human opinions that has engendered

all the unscriptural doctrines and practices of the followers of Antichrist.

II. But it will hardly be questioned that the Scriptures are sufficient for salvation provided that their true meaning can be ascertained. "But they are so dark and inexplicable that ordinary minds and especially children, are quite incompetent to the task of understanding them." So say the devotees of Rome, and so said the great Origen who made the whole volume a bundle of inexplicable mysticisms. It is true that some portions of the sacred volume require the most careful investigations, and the most rigid analysis to fully understand them. Those who have studied them longest and who have enjoyed the greatest facilities for their elucidation have ever found new beauties unfolding themselves, and difficulties which required all the exercise of their mighty minds to explain. But there are other parts of the sacred writings which are adapted to the comprehension of the most obtuse mind. If Timothy knew them, why may not other children? If the son of Eunice was made wise unto salvation by them, why may they not have the same effect upon other infant minds? But this is not a question which remains to be settled. The experience of years has demonstrated that even children of tender years can comprehend all the essentials of religion. He who cannot calculate the

area of a triangle, or discern the beauties and blemishes of rhetoric ; who knows not whether

——“The moon,
That nightly o'er him leads her virgin hosts,”

is an enormous world, or is no larger than his father's shield, may nevertheless apprehend the cardinal truths taught in the Bible, have his heart affected by its enunciations, and by it be made wise unto salvation. Since the Sabbath School has flung out its redoubts against Papacy and Infidelity, we may safely appeal from the decisions of Popes and Synods and Councils to the beardless Timothies of our land whose minds are laden with a more correct Theology, drawn from the living wells of inspiration. Yes, the Sabbath School—the nursery of the upper and the nether church—that guide board pointing to heaven, stands forth the wonder of the nineteenth century. And what is a Sabbath School ? A place where children are instructed in the truths of the Bible. It proceeds upon the principle that children may understand those truths ; and the pungent convictions, the clear conversions and the triumphant deaths of many who there received their moral training, attest that the idea was not chimerical ? Let Bible truth be presented to the youthful mind. Let it be mingled with their daily food and sprinkled upon them with the baptismal dew. Select from the sacred oracles line upon

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line and precept upon precept ; bind them about their necks and write them upon the hearts ; and though no fruit of all your toil and pain be manifested for a while, yet in the sequel every word will prove bread cast upon the waters. It will germinate after many days, and bring forth fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold.

Among the earliest of our remembrances is the account of the trial, condemnation and execution of three brothers by the name of Thayer, in the western part of this state, for the murder of John Love. To those who are more advanced in years, this will appear as a more recent event ; but it was among the first things I ever read ; and this circumstance together with the enormity of the crime ; and the proximity of the dreadful scene, served to engrave it deeply on my youthful heart. A fact connected with their early history, has since come to my knowledge, which strikingly illustrates the importance of putting the Book of God into the hands of the young. Elder Carey, often visited these young men in their cells previous to their execution. He had been their playmate and early companion, and now in their wretched condition, he sought to benefit them by his instructions and his prayers. It was the morning of their execution, and he was bidding them his last farewell. They besought him to attend them to the fatal place ; but on account of

his early associations with them, and the dread he felt at seeing the friends of his youth thus hurried into eternity, he begged to be excused, and was about leaving the prison when Isaac, the younger brother, taking him by the hand, said, "Elder Carey, tell the young people you address, that if I had read my Bible as much during my whole life as I have done since I have been in this cell, I never should have murdered Love." Upon hearing this statement says my informant, who is a successful Sabbath School agent, the Rev. Mr. Towsley, I visited the unfortunate mother, who gave me the following relation: "When I was first married I had a small Bible, but it soon disappeared, and never since have I been permitted to have a Bible in my house;" and I, he added, gave her one. In these affecting statements there is contained a volume of moral instruction. Those parents had no Bible, and no wonder that their gray hairs were brought down to the grave with sorrow. Those children had no Bible, nor were their young minds imbued with its sacred teachings, and no wonder that the sun of their being went down at noon, and went down in blood.

1. If the assertions of St. Paul, as contained in our text are true, in what light shall we regard the efforts which are made to exclude the Holy Scriptures from our schools, and from every system of public instruc-

tions? We hesitate not to affirm that were such efforts to succeed, our civil, social and religious institutions would be shaken to their fall. We look for their perpetuity only to the diffusion of intelligent piety. But what standard of piety will remain, and what media for diffusing it when God's great letter to man has been either smothered or destroyed! Let us glean lessons of wisdom from the history of the past. What has been the history of other nations where the Bible has been a proscribed book? France has passed through the extremes of superstition and infidelity. The former proceeded, the latter attended and followed her fearful revolution. Under both these states, the Bible was anathemized; first by the besotted priests, and secondly by the infuriated Jacobins. The first prohibited its perusal unless by express license from the bishops, the latter denounced it as the work of imposture. It is easy to trace this hostility of the revolutions to its source. They saw the corruptions of Rome and charged them upon Christianity. They groaned under the exactions of priestly domination, and imagined that in resisting them they were opposing the principles of the Redeemer's kingdom. Never was there a greater mistake. Yet this was the issue presented to the people. Christianity was caricatured. Instead of appearing in its simple dress, it was arrayed in the attire of man's devising, the sur-

plice and the lawn ; and men despised it. No wonder that in the whirlpool of that fearful revolution the altar and the throne, the crosier and the crown, were alike swallowed up. But Infidelity, like Romanism, had no Bible. Hence its devotees had no control ; and in the fearful carnivals that marked the reign of terror, you may read the history of a nation without a Bible. And if you covet such a destiny for your country, exclude the Bible, that palladium of your virtue, your institutions and your liberties, from those nurseries of your citizens—"the public schools."

2. One other thought and we have done. If the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation let its supremacy in all matters of faith and practice be theoretically and practically acknowledged. Is any opinion, of doubtful authority, or any practice, of uncertain obligation? Decide it not by an appeal to Augustine, or Chrysostom, to the Council of Trent, or the Synod of Dort, but to the law and the testimony ; and when this appeal is made, let us not receive its responses as of doubtful import, which may be fairly judged of by human reason. What is all this but an avowal that we are already fully informed upon every question, and are therefore in such a state as to need no revelation from heaven? If God had not spoken to us at all, it would indeed become us in our dark and dependent state to be casting about

us for some foundation for our sinking feet ; it would then do for us to be talking about nature and reason; it would be well enough to make appeals to the opinions and practices of our ancestors and our contemporaries ; but all this is now clearly at variance with right reason—in the face of an authoritative message from God himself. Let us submit our minds to the truths He has communicated and our hearts and lives to the discipline which He appoints. Could we all do this sincerely and honestly, the asperities of discordant and clashing creeds would be greatly softened ; protestant Christians would insensibly but rapidly approach each other, and in true fraternal feeling grasp each other's hand ; the advance of the seven-headed beast of Rome, with his young bantling of Oxford, would be arrested ; the Vatican would be disarmed of its thunders, and the city of the seven hills would be purified of its abominations. Then dark and scowling Infidelity too, would beat a retreat from earth ; and, discomfited and overthrown, hide its dark head in the dens forgetfulness. Then, in the language of the Psalmist, would our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters be as corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace.

SERMON IV.

GOD KIND TO THE UNTHANKFUL AND EVIL.

(A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE.)

Luke, vi: 35.—“He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.

The relations which God sustains to his creatures are so different from those which subsist between man, and man, that it is impossible, aside from revelation, to determine what will be his procedure toward an individual distinguished for ingratitude and guilt. Were we guided solely by analogy, our apprehensions would be very much excited in view of the retributions to which we should stand exposed. Had we been distinguished rebels against an earthly sovereign, whose right to us and whose authority over us were undisputed, and who had unbounded facilities for our apprehension and punishment, there would be just occasion for alarm. How much more when we view ourselves in the light of rebels against Almighty God.

At that awful crisis, when I have just awakened to a consciousness of my exposed state, the question, “How will God deal with me?” is one in the decision of which I am most deeply interested. Feeble is the consolation which I can gather from all I learn of the Divine character in this natural world.

Clouds and darkness gather in fearful thickness around His throne, and impenetrable mystery veils His moral character from my view. If I call human analogies to my aid, my anxieties are rather augmented than diminished. I know how men deal with their enemies. If men are unthankful to an earthly sovereign, the benefactions he has been accustomed to bestow are withheld. If they rise in rebellion he musters his steel-clad warriors, writes "vengeance" upon his banners, and goes forth, with fire and sword, to destroy the murderers and burn up their city. And who can assure me that some such destiny may not be awaiting our guilty race? In the midst of so much that is alarming, how grateful is the annunciation which falls from the Savior's lips, "He is kind to the unthankful and the evil." Continued ingratitude has not exhausted the Divine beneficence; and though earth has been the scene of a determined and protracted rebellion, yet the loving kindness of the Lord has ever been flowing earthward. We are assembled to-day under interesting circumstances. At the invitation of our chief magistrate we have suspended our usual pursuits, and, in connection with many of our citizens of other States, have assembled at our place of worship to offer up thanksgiving, and praise *Him* who has crowned the year with his goodness.

Let us endeavor to excite these grateful emotions in our hearts by reviewing the kindness of the Lord manifested to us as individuals and as a people. This kindness will shine forth in a more illustrious and cheering light, when our character and circumstances are taken into the account. That God should be kind to the thankful and the good, is not strange; but kindness to the unthankful and the evil is what we have little ground to expect or claim. But we trust a careful survey will satisfy us that this has been our character, and that this has been the Divine procedure toward us. If our text possesses the pertinency which I think I discover in it, our first proposition will be that,

I. We are an unthankful people. Thankfulness is a grateful emotion exercised toward a benefactor. It pre-supposes favors conferred by another. No individual can establish a well-grounded claim upon my gratitude who has not in some manner befriended me, or in some manner promoted my interests. For an individual who has not done this I may have *love, respect and reverence*, but not gratitude. This can only glow in the bosom of a beneficiary, and can only be cherished toward one who has interested himself in my welfare. Hence Gov. Everett, after saying, he that neglects his children in their youth shall feel, in after years, how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have

a thankless child, corrects himself, and adds, "No! I will not wrong even him. We may be everything else that is bad,—an undutiful, a refractory, an incorrigible child; one that will pull down age, drag down his father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, but a thankless child he cannot be. What has he to be thankful for? If a child has been the recipient of no favors, if he has grown up without parental solicitude and parental care, he cannot, he ought not to be thankful. And if it can be shown that we have received no favors from the hand of the Lord, His claim upon our gratitude is ill-founded, and must not be admitted. But if, on the contrary, He has done us good and not evil all our days, if we have been the objects of His unmitigated regards and gracious benefactions ever since our existence began, then will a failure on our part to exercise toward Him the liveliest sentiments of gratitude, place upon us the broadest, deepest stamp of guilt." Ingratitude is unlovely wherever and by whomever it is exhibited. The child who daily shares a parent's care, but who forgets the hand that feeds and clothes him,—the poor whose wants are ascertained and provided for, by "the sunny messenger of charity," but who is petulant and complaining to his benefactor,—the prisoner whose chains are stricken off by some philanthropic hand,

but who looks not with grateful, streaming eyes towards his deliverer, may justly be compared to the frozen viper, which being, through kindness, warmed again into life, with returning energies stung his deliverer to the heart. Now let us enquire what occasions have we for gratitude to God, and as they pass in rapid review before us,

“Oh ! that our thoughts and thanks may rise,
As grateful incense to the skies ;”

and let this be with us, not in name only, but in reality, “a Thanksgiving day.”

1. Life is a blessing for which we should be thankful.

If there is any individual of whom it may be said, as of Christ's betrayer, “good had it been for that man if he had never been born,” it should be remembered that his own conduct has rendered his existence a curse. His crimes are the parents of his calamities ; and with his crimes the author of his being is not chargeable. To one who has reached a point of wretchedness so extreme that life itself is loathsome, it may usually be said, “Oh, man ! thou hast ruined thyself.” But who courts annihilation ?

“Who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
These thoughts that wander through eternity
To perish, rather swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion ?”

None but he from whose heart hope has forever fled away, and who has reached, or imagines himself certain to reach, a land where souls forever wish to die but cannot. Existence *is* a blessing ; but like all other blessings, it may become a *terrible* inheritance to its possessor.

2. Health is a blessing. It is that, indeed, without which all other blessings are comparatively valueless, and with which all afflictions are tolerable. They who have never felt disease cannot appreciate health. They possess a jewel of priceless value, but upon which they do not, perhaps cannot, set a correct estimate. They must lose it in order to appreciate it.

“Like birds whose beauties languish half concealed,
Till mounted on the wing their glossy plumes
Expanded shine with green and azure gold ;
So blessings brighten as they take their flight.”

This is especially true of him whose constitution has become impaired by disease, and from whose cheek the rose of health has faded. To regain the blessing he has lost he visits every genial clime, resorts to every seat of medical skill, tries every famed panacea, and drinks at every health restoring spring. One truth, at least, was uttered by the father of lies when he declared that “all that a man hath will he give for his life.”

Now life and health are not only blessings, but they

are blessings of God. "Every good, and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights." Obedience to the laws of our nature, temperance, correct dietetic habits, are, to be sure, the appointed means of preserving life and health,—but they are only means and instrumentalities after all. They are the secondary while God is the primary, and moving cause. Am I sick? it is because His hand is upon me. Am I in health? it is because He healeth all my diseases. He sendeth forth His Spirit and we are created. He withdraweth His hand and we die, and return to the earth as we were.

3. To the blessings of life and health let us add those common mercies which we every day enjoy, and which, because they are common, we are so prone to undervalue. We raise the glass of water to our lips, but forget it was God who watereth the earth from His chambers, making the springs to gush out from our hills, and the streams to meander through our valleys. We approach our tables groaning under all the luxuries of the season, but forget the Being who imparted fertility to our fields, and crowned the labors of the husbandman with success. Like the Israelites, who greedily gathered up their manna, but forgot their God, we revel amid the benefactions of Providence, while the God of Providence is not in all

our thoughts. The gift has stolen our heart from the giver.

And what though these blessings come to us through a sensible channel? Are they the less valuable on that account? Are we less fed because God has appointed a visible hand to feed us? Are not the fruits of Autumn just as delicious, though clustering on our trees and vines, as though they fell from heaven? And is not the produce of our fields just as nutritious, though we behold first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, as though, like the prophet's gourd, it sprang up in the night? And are not our waters just as sweet and refreshing as though gushing from a newly smitten rock? Now withdraw these blessings for a single day, and we feel the need of them; and in a few days we sicken and die.

A traveler is on the burning desert. He is faint and weary and famishing with hunger and thirst. On and on he wanders, and with strained eyes he scans the horizon for some sign of vegetation, in that desert land. And now he sees some object which excites hope. It seems a goat skin filled with water, lost by some passing caravan.

"The heart of the wanderer beats high in his breast,
Joy quickens his pulse, all his hardships seem o'er,
And emotions of rapture arise in his breast—
Oh, God! thou hast blest me, I ask for no more."

But ah! a bitter disappointment awaits him. As his parched lips are almost swimming in the liquid element, he discovers that it is filled with pearls and diamonds, and costly coins. Despair is pictured on his features. "They are nothing but diamonds" he exclaims, as he casts them on the sand and lays down to die.

If Esau returning famished from the chase, freely gave his birth-right for a mess of pottage,—if David in the heat of conflict, sighed only for a draught of water from the well of Bethlehem,—if the rich man in the hour of his extremity would freely part with all his treasures for one full meal, how grateful should we be to that Providence which gives us all things richly to enjoy. We ought especially to have our gratitude to God excited for these mercies which come to us abundantly, notwithstanding our evil auguries and apprehensions. Oh! how many impatient glances have been cast this summer toward the cloudless heavens, and when the showers have not descended we have had murmuring thoughts of Providence, and indulged in bodings of want, if not of famine. But though the heavens have held back their rain, God who has control of nature's most secret agencies, has furnished us with a competency of the necessaries and comforts of life. Our seed has not rotted under the sod, but that which has been committed to the

earth has reproduced itself thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. Let winter marshal its storms, and commence its terrible reign. In our ceiled houses, with our forests of fuel, and our well stored granaries and cellars, God has rendered us well nigh invincible to hunger or cold. No famine with gaunt form and shriveled lipsshakes his rod over our land. We hear no tread of wasting pestilence ; the cholera which has of late paid us an almost annual visit, has not this year menaced our commonwealth ; and the yellow fever just looked in upon us, but, like Dr. Kane, near the pole, has found itself in too high latitudes and retired. Europe has been stacking her arms and tying up her leviathan war-ships, and wrapping up her banners, and goes staggering on under her crushing debts, and more crushing despotism, while we have been extending our commerce, multiplying our manufactories, developing the resources of our soil, and our mines, electing Presidents, building churches and educating our children. Had we time to dwell on these common mercies of life ; oh ! in what thick array do they pass before us. Who of us are accustomed to thank the Lord for sight and hearing ? Yet are these faculties, inlets of rich and unremitting enjoyment to every one of us. Who blesses God in his heart for *reason* ? Yet, oh ! what a calamity to have reason eclipsed, to have the intellect pass into

the shadow of the great cloud of raving insanity. Who appreciate as they should their domestic enjoyments, their Eden home? Yet are they among the nobler joys which have survived the fall. You need not look away, O man, for remarkable deliverances, for signal and unprecedented mercies to awaken your gratitude. Blessings gather around your steps by day, and angels watch nightly by your pillow. Rolling years bring fresh accessions of gladness to thy heart. The upper and the nether springs combine to bless thee.

Were I to give a little widersweep to my thoughts, I might dwell upon the occasions of gratitude furnished by the *history* of our country; a history as eventful, as wonderful, as the scenes of Arabian story; and it is the truth of history which is thus stranger than the dreams of fiction.

He who cannot see *God* in the history of this country, cannot see him in the passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan; the discovery of the gunpowder plot, or the defeat of the Spanish armada. God has prepared in the wilderness of the western world, an asylum where freedom erects her altars, and religion builds her temples. Education and civilization have made their home on our shores. It is no light thing that you live in a land where every citizen is a sovereign, where liberty of speech and of the press are allowed,

where no unholy wedlock exists between church and state, where you may smile alike at the frowns of kings and the anathemas of popes, where you own no superior, but conscience and God.

Now I can have no object in fastening the charge of ingratitude upon my countrymen; but if our gratitude should be excited in exact proportion to our mercies, then are we not an unthankful people? Has our return of grateful praise, at all corresponded with the benefactions of our Father's hand? The sun has shed its warm beams upon us, but we have forgotten that it was God who made it rise on the evil and on the good. The fertilizing showers have fallen upon our fields, but we have forgotten the Being who sent them upon the just and the unjust. We have reaped our harvests without offering up the first fruits to the God of the seasons. The blessings of education and religion, have fallen upon us like showers from the summer cloud, and have been as little appreciated. Freedom's hosts speak out in thunder through the ballot box, and determine who shall make, expound and execute our laws, while Russian, Austrian and French despotism, is crushing out the vitals of European liberty, and while embruted gangs of human cattle toil in hopeless bondage in a large portion of our own republic.

I find a further and higher occasion of gratitude in the gift of a Savior for the redemption of the world, and for unnumbered religious blessings and hopes which accrue to us through Him. And here divine beneficence puts on new and strange aspects, and rises to a height to which the mind of man in vain looks up. It cannot reach the mystery, the length, the breadth, the height. I will go as far as the philosopher of this world in admiring the Divine goodness as displayed in Creation and Providence. I see the exuberance of that goodness shining in every sunbeam and sparkling in every rolling star. But the plenitude of His goodness is not exhausted here. The highest exhibitions of the love of God will elude your gaze unless you travel on to Calvary. "Heaven is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and gave His Son to die for us." Men have sometimes died for their friends, never for their enemies. But while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us. He came to an evil and thankless world. He subdued a world's animosity by His love. By submission He conquered. He received the sword into His own bosom and then rising from the scene of His humiliation he would fain draw the world after Him to heaven. Such love demands our highest gratitude our most fervent love. As blessings thus come down to us from the sweet heaven, earth ought to be perpetually returning exha-

lations of grateful praise. Oh! are we not ungrateful when we neglect so many means, and motives, and mercies.

II. But inviting as is this field I must leave it and pass on. I am called upon to contemplate my country in other aspects than those which relate to her mercies and her ingratitude. The unthankful and the evil are the individuals to whom God is said to be kind. That we are ungrateful, we have seen, that we are evil in another and higher sense is equally apparent. Oh! yes, we cannot disguise the fact to ourselves, we cannot disguise to the nations of the earth, we cannot disguise it before God, that we are an evil people. I love my country with all the ardor of a son, with all her faults I love her so well that were the map of the world spread before me, and were the stream of all time flowing by, there is no spot on the one, or period in the other, where I would rather pass the measure of my days, than in these United States, and in the midst of the Nineteenth Century. But *because* I love her, I must be faithful in the exhibition of her faults, for while the kisses of an enemy are deceitful, the wounds of a friend are faithful.

I shall not feel called upon to-day to confine my thoughts to any section of our common country nor allow State lines to interrupt the field of my view. Upon some Nebo that overlooks the whole land I take

my station. My first look is southward and it is a pleasant land I see. I see its rich plantations of rustling cane, its snowy cotton, and its tropical fruits ripening under the warm breath of an eternal spring. Surely these are Arcadian bowers. Surely these are fairy haunts where love and purity abide, where peace has her halcyon home, "where sports the warbling muse and fancy roves sublime." But what mean the groans of sable millions who bow down in unrequited and everlasting toil? What mean the oaths, the menaces, and the lash by which they are driven to their weary and wasting labors? Ah! my friends, the cupidity and the pride of man has introduced this anomalous institution in a republic which boasts of freedom and equality; and still the dark inhumanity of the system makes countless millions mourn. This is the peerless sin of our nation, rising up in terrible distinctness among the sins that darken our history and invite the judgments of God. I have no heart to dwell on its darkening details, no wish to aggravate them, and no ability to extenuate them. These evils are *obvious* to the eye of the whole world, they are *felt* by the millions who are the victims of the system, they are *deplored* by all who love humanity; and it requires the eagle eye of faith to see the day of deliverance. For myself, I see little ground of *human* hope, Northward and southward the mighty evil

seems destined to spread ; virgin plains and untrodden mountains seem destined to be blighted by its leprous touch, and millions yet unborn to be its devoted victims. The issue at our recent election may have been ignored at the north, but at the south it was well understood to be a struggle for the supremacy of the slave power, and the result is without doubt regarded as a triumph of that interest. In Nicaragua, the brigand Walker is preparing new territory for slavery, with the evident connivance and approval of men high in power among us. The Islands in our West Indian Archipelago are eagerly watched and coveted by the minions of the slave power. The revival of the African slave trade is openly advocated in the south, and the Supreme Court of the United States are menacing the constitutionality of our State laws which prohibit masters from bringing their slaves to the north and retaining them in bondage. With such facts before us men may bless themselves with the illusion that slavery is destined to a speedy overthrow, if they choose,—but for myself, I see small ground for hope. God may interpose for our slave population as he did for the Israelites in Egypt, and by means as remarkable effect their deliverance,—but it will be by a process which human sagacity cannot foresee,—perhaps by a whirlwind of wrath which will

scatter the defences of the oppressor like autumnal leaves before the tempest.

That other giant evil, intemperance, which we always associate with slavery, if not equally in the ascendant, is yet luxuriating in a temporary triumph. I have no confidence in the philanthropy of the man who clamors about slavery in the south or the west, but who cannot see, or does not deplore a kindred abomination which riots in our own streets, and menaces every thing which is lovely in our own midst. And yet after years of effort, where are we in regard to this great reform? First, an executive veto paralysed the efforts of the friends of the cause, then a judicial pronunciamento appalled our hearts, and according to the judges it *is* constitutional to catch the panting fugitive from slavery and hurl him back into its horrors, but for a legislation to prohibit the traffic in intoxicating drinks for drinking purposes, *this* is unconstitutional! Proscribed in New England, outlawed in Canada, prohibited in various sections of the west, it yet finds toleration in this the greatest and richest of the confederated states. I cannot, I will not believe that this evil is destined to endure through all generations. The hosts of temperance though beaten down in many a hard fought field, have a recuperative power which ensures their final triumph. Truth has an inherent immortality, and it must ultimately

prevail. This at least is the language of hope and should be the burden of our desires and efforts and prayers.

Sins, like misfortunes generally go in groups, and as the steam-boat takes under its wings a whole convoy of lesser craft, so these monster evils foster and perpetuate every other evil. Slavery, naturally leads to oppression, cruelty, licentiousness, duelling, and theft; and intemperance is the parent of a similar progeny. Profanity is its attendant murder is in its train. It converts the holy Sabbath into a day of revelry and sin. It gives perpetuity to the den of licentiousness and feeds with fresh victims the hell of the gambler. Each of these evils admits of great amplification, but the bare enumeration of them aided by your reflections, abundantly demonstrates that we are an evil people. But though I thus see and deplore evils, I am neither a croaker or alarmist. I will still cling to the conviction that the Gospel will work out the redemption of our country, and of the world. We have come to look hoary error in the face and demand by what right it claims toleration or life. We have determined to throttle wrong wherever it can be found. We purpose to extend and strengthen the lines of freedom, of education and religion. The Sabbath School is flinging out its redoubts against the advance of Popery and infidelity. More governors are

sending out proclamations for thanksgiving days, and many of them like our own governor's, pervaded by a highly religious tone. These are harbingers of better times. Like the beams of early morning, which glance and dance upon the mountain tops, they bethoken the dawns of a brighter day. Upon you, sons and daughters of this happy land, rests the responsibility of retarding or hastening its coming.

III. But the cheering sentiment of our text remains unchanged, that though evil and thankless, God is still kind to us. His exuberant bounty surrounds us still, the garnished heavens and the green earth, still have beauty for our eye and music for our ear. Our fields are still fertile, and propitious gales still sweep to our shores the productions of other lands. Our institutions still shed their kindly influence on us and our children, and the Gospel still tenders to us its gracious and ample provisions. Do we ever ask, "Oh why does not his anger burn against our guilty race?" the answer is, "I am God and not man, *therefore*, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The spirit of forbearance and forgiveness which prompted the prayer, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," still restrains the sword of justice, and showers blessings and benedictions upon us.

IV. The two emotions which should be especially

inspired by these views of the Divine goodness, are gratitude to God and benevolence to man. If we stand convicted at the bar of conscience of past ingratitude, oh ! let us be ungrateful no more. Let the remembrance of God's past mercies " dissolve our hearts in tenderness, and melt our eyes to tears."

The governors of perhaps one half of our states have invited their fellow-citizens to observe this day as a day of thanksgiving and praise. Would that it were a national thanksgiving ; that from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, all our churches were crowded with worshippers, and that the song of grateful melody were rising from twenty millions of hearts.

But gratitude is an emotion of soul and not an external act, and unless our hearts rise in unison with our tongues, the loudest, sweetest songs we raise will be in the ear of Him who discovereth our thoughts, but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Our gratitude should be *sincere*, originating in a heartfelt sense of favors received ; *intense*, commensurate, if possible with the greatness of the occasions exciting it ; and *constant*, running through all the measures of our days.

" Through every period of our life,
His goodness we'll pursue,
And after death in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew."

2. The other sentiment which should be excited in view of this subject is benevolence to our fellow-men. This is indeed the deduction drawn by our Saviour from these words,—“Be ye also merciful even as your Father in heaven is merciful.”

Some of you as you go from this place, will sit down to your thanksgiving dinners, which your mothers, your companions, and your sisters, know so well how to prepare ; but in the hour of your feasting, think of your poor neighbor, who has none,—who hears the clamorous call of his children for bread which he has not to bestow. It is hard to be poor at any time. It is hard even in the warmth of summer, and amid the plenty of harvest. But oh ! it is harder to be poor in winter.

“He who has seen and felt it knows,
It is hard, very hard to be poor when it snows.”

The school boy may rejoice as he counts the descending flakes and builds his snowy castles ; the young man and maiden, may laugh at the storm as wrapt in furs and buffalo robes they take their new year’s ride ; but it is a far different thing with him on whose hearth no cheerful faggots blaze, around whose habitation the storm moans and howls, and who is without protection and without bread. Oh ! how often has my heart been affected with alternate emotions of

pity and indignation, as I have read those affecting lines in the beggar's prayer :

Yon house erected on the rising ground,
 With tempting aspect drew me from my road,
 For plenty there a residence has found,
 And grandeur a magnificent abode.

Hard is the fate of the infirm and poor ;
 Here as I craved a morsel of their bread,
 A pampered menial drove me from the door,
 To seek a shelter in an open shed.

Oh ! take me to you hospitable dome,
 Keen blows the wind and piercing is the cold,
 Short is my passage to the friendly tomb,
 For I am poor and miserably old.

You may not have turned away the aged or the poor when to your ear the voice of supplication came, but you should sometimes go abroad in quest of misery that pines unseen and will not ask. The poor man who was lying stripped, and wounded, and half dead, by the way side, *did not ask* charity at the hand of the priest or the Levite, and they passed him by on the other side. But did this justify the hard-hearted men in their neglect. Why every wound he had was eloquent, and his very destitution had a tongue. The fact that men are needy, and that we have ability to supply their wants fixes upon us the obligation to be merciful to them even as our heavenly Father is merciful unto us.

Oh! how many of us in rendering up our final account say with him of Uz, "When the ear heard me then it blessed me and when these saw me it gave witness to me because I delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out."

Nor will it answer the purpose at all to say "Be ye warmed and be ye clothed" and there stop, but in the language of Dean Swift, we must "down with the dust," and if we want security for its repayment here we have it, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given Him will He repay him again."

But gratitude to God, and benevolence to man can only be inspired by rational and consistent piety. We would be glad to see these sweet waters gushing forth from every heart, but this cannot be expected while that heart remains the seat of corruption, and all uncleanness. When from purified hearts, such offerings go to God they will be more acceptable in his sight than hecatombs of slaughtered victims. And when this work of regeneration is universal and complete, Christianity may rise from the greatness of her

achievements and look down with complacency on a ransomed world. Then shall we be that happy people whose God is the Lord, whose sons are like plants grown up in their youth, and whose daughters are like corner stones fashioned after the similitude of a palace. Then peace shall dwell on earth, and righteousness look down from heaven.

“ The dwellers in the vales and on the hills,
Shout to each other; while mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy
Earth rolls the rapturous hosannas round.”

SERMON V.

WHAT WE SHALL BE.

i John iii : 3.—“ It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Aside from revelation man is a mystery to himself. Though furnished with the light of nature and science, and all the means of information which lie within himself, he must yet remain in a state of helpless ignorance. Of his origin, of the purposes of his being, of the right use of his intellect and passions, of the relations he sustains to other intelligences, he must forever remain uninformed. How much more

profound then will be his ignorance of a *future* state. Indeed, in regard to the existence of another world at all, his profoundest reasonings and most elaborate conclusions, will be vague conjectures made up of alternations of hope and fear.

And if the utmost stretch of human reason fails to demonstrate the fact of a future state, much less will her fire-fly flashes so far illumine the future, as to disclose to man the position he shall there occupy, or the relations he shall there sustain. As the sailor far out on the stormy deep, with a cloudy sky above, and a "wilderness of waves" around him, must remain in awful suspense as to his position and destiny, until the clouds disperse and he can lay his course by those light-houses of heaven, the unvarying stars; so we must remain in a state of awful uncertainty of the future, until our ignorance be dissipated by the bright shining of a light from heaven. All we know on this deeply absorbing theme, we know from revelation which God hath given. This discloses to us the *fact* that if a man die, he shall live again; and furnishes us with some information respecting the glorious state of those who have passed the first resurrection.

But while with strained gaze we search for more extended, and definite communications, the volume suddenly closes with the pride-humbling, but hope-inspiring annunciation, "It doth not yet appear what we

shall be." It becomes us to bow to this withholding of additional light, and betake ourselves to the study of what is imparted. The pen of inspiration has drawn the bold and distinct outlines of the great panorama, and in tracing and admiring these we shall find sufficient employment for time, reserving the sketching of minuter scenery, and the coloring and finishing of the whole as the work of eternity. As the voyager cruising in unknown seas, and reaching a continent unknown to the map of the mariner, can only ascertain its general position and extent,—and as he sweeps along its shores can only mark here an indentation, and there a jutting promontory, unable to mark across its length and breadth, to survey its mountains and its plains, and familiarize himself with its productions and inhabitants; so man, cruising in the darkness of time, can only catch some dim and distant glimpses of his future self, and read the preface to his future intellectual and moral history. For a full view, and an entire perusal, he must wait until that which is perfect is come. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

The analogies of the present state lead us, however, to anticipate no inconsiderable change. When the insect lies dormant in its chrysalis state, "it doth not appear what it shall be" when it shall burst its tomb, rise on its gilded wings and soar away in the bright

sunshine. When the little shrub springs up beneath our feet, "it doth not yet appear what it shall be," when it has grown to maturity and strength,—an "oak of Bashan" or a "cedar of Lebanon." When the sun first lights up the east with its scarcely perceptible blushes, "it doth not yet appear what it will be," when it mounts its car, rides at highest noon, and sends its successive tides of light o'er land and ocean. But if the analogies of the intelligent creation, seem to point out for redeemed and immortal man, a lofty destination ; much more do the changes and improvements which he undergoes in the present life.

How marked the transition from the embryo to the infant, from the infant to the man. The difference between a mind in which the learning of Newton, the zeal of Paul and the love of John are blended,—the difference I say between such a man and an infant, is probably as great as between such a mind and an angel. If man undergoes improvements as great in passing from time to eternity as he does in passing from the infantile to the mature state, how marked and mighty will be the change. Look at the child ! how imbecile ! how helpless ! It is conscious of no other want than that of the present moment, and has no other desire than its gratification. Let one or two score years pass and that child has become a man ; and now in stature how erect and noble ! in beauty

how perfect! in strength how mighty! in comprehension how angelic! in purity, perhaps, how godlike! Mark his achievements, compared with those of the infant. Does he tread the fields of military fame? Earth is too contracted a field for his ambition. Is wealth the object of his search? He traverses earth's burning plains, doubles its stormy capes, and dives deep into its gold-ribbed bosom. Does his soul go forth in song? He seizes the loftiest thoughts that mortals know, molds them into harmonious numbers, and imprints them on the burning page. At pleasure he makes the universe and eternity the play-ground of his thoughts. Man has laid the universe under contribution, made the solid earth and the starry heavens yield up their secrets at his bidding, harnessed the elements to his car and made the lightnings his messengers. Now do not the improvements of which man is capable in the *present* life, furnish us with data from which to infer his advancement in *another*? Is this *capacity* for mental and moral growth an element or accident of the soul? If death puts a final period to its aspirations, then is all discipline a mockery, human nature a lie, and man's loftiest attainments in the present life, *mighty beginnings of nothing*.

But what is thus the evident teachings of analogy, is revealed with far greater distinctness in the second

and more clearly authenticated message of God to men. Guided by this light which emanates from heaven, let us humbly inquire after the future condition of good men. This inquiry is natural, and if not prosecuted beyond the sober bounds which revelation has set up, is both proper and laudable. We cannot say of a loved and valued friend, as is reported to have been said over an infidel's grave,

“Where he has gone to, and how he fares
Nobody knows, and nobody cares.”

We see them moving in swift procession to the grave. Solicitude we cannot but feel ; and some degree of information we may obtain respecting the condition of the departed saint.

1. In regard to his physical condition, (if we may employ a phrase perhaps unknown in heaven, where *spirit* may be the only object of cognizance,) scripture assures us, it will undergo very considerable modifications. He will be divested of all those portions of his system which are peculiarly adapted to his present mode of existence. Members which are necessary appendages of the body here, would be excrescences there. Hence the sentence of destruction is gone forth against them. “Meats for the stomach and the stomach for meats ; but God shall destroy both it and them.” All these organs by which the

various processes of mastication, digestion, secretion and re-production, are carried on, being unnecessary under the new laws of his being, will not be found in the resurrection body of the saints. But over and above all these minor and partial transformations and improvements, we shall be changed; for flesh and blood doth not inherit the kingdom of God. These material and corruptible bodies are to be changed into the image of Christ's most glorious body. Does any one enquire, *how* the mighty transformation can take place? We answer, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." In the Scriptures it is affirmed, and by the power of God it shall be accomplished. The body we now inhabit, and that of the resurrection are identical. To suppose an annihilation of one body and a creation of another, is to strip of all meaning those passages which speak of a *change* and a *resurrection*; and any objection springing from a possible clashing ownership of dust, is readily answered by remarking that God can prevent any such assimilation, either by original law or by especial providence.

A most consoling fact respecting the glorified bodies of the saints, is their perfect exemption from suffering. This might be fairly inferred from their freedom from all these curses which induce disease; but we prefer to place it on the plain assertions of Reve-

lation. And oh ! how consoling to him who has never known any thing but pain is the assurance "they shall suffer no more." No ! suffering saint. Thy last agony goes forth with thy last breath ; that hollow cough shall give way to the deep bass of heaven's eternal music ; that hectic glow upon thy cheek, shall give place to the bloom of eternal youth and beauty. The atmosphere of heaven is never vocal with groans, its streets are never bathed in tears, its inhabitants never say "I am sick ;" everlasting joy is the diadem with which they are crowned, their days of mourning shall end, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away forever. To press our inquiries farther in this direction is manifestly improper and unnecessary. To such as are disposed to inquire beyond the Scriptural assurances that the saints shall come with incorruptible and immortal bodies, free from all deformity and like the glorious body of Christ, our answer is, "It doth not yet fully appear what we shall be, nor will it, until we shall see the King in his beauty, and our ears be entranced by the song of seraphims."

2. Heaven is a scene of social delights. Man is a social being here, and a large part of his pleasures flow from the indulgence of his social powers. These pleasures must be vastly enhanced, when the soul ascends to society perfectly congenial, and all the impediments are removed which now interrupt the har-

mony and permanency of our intercourse. What means of intercourse exist among beings purely spiritual, through what media the correspondence of heaven is carried on, and what is the precise nature of the socialities of heaven, are among the things which do not perfectly appear; but that such correspondence exists is among the things which are revealed.

The question has been frequently agitated, whether saints on earth will recognize each other in heaven? Aside from that hope which ardently anticipates such a recognition, and aside from the absurdity of supposing that any one of our intellectual faculties is either stricken from being, or shorn of its strength by exchanging earth for heaven, we think the affirmative of this question is favored, at least inferentially, by weighty Scripture testimony. Moses and Elias were recognized on the holy mount by the wondering disciples. Lazarus, in his lofty estate, was recognized by tormented Dives. Those who shall come up from the four quarters of the earth are represented as sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. Now what signifies it that we sit down in the company of these great lights of the church, unless they are known unto us, and we become known unto them. As little satisfaction would such association yield, as is experienced by the servile

minions of royalty, or by him who pines unseen in the shade of the autocrat's throne. And what else did the apostle in the close of that inimitable chapter, the thirteenth of First Corinthians? Employing the same analogical argument which we have adopted, he tells us that when he was a child he had the understanding of a child, but that these had vanished with advancing years; so "now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

We conceive, then, that this avenue of joy is not closed up, and that the joys of Christian friendship below are but the preludes to a changeless "communion of saints" in heaven. These ties are, however, purely *spiritual*, and must be distinguished from those natural attachments and affections, which result from our present mode of existence. These are but the accidents of our nature, and their necessity ceases, when they have answered the purposes for which they were given. The parental, the conjugal, and the filial relations are known only on earth. Such was the teaching of Christ to the tempting Sadducees. But they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like to the angels of God. It matters not, then, whether there did, or did not, exist any relationship or intimacy on earth. Two

spirits, the one coming from the zenith, the other from the nadir of creation, will cherish toward each other the same holy affections, as though they had sprung from the same ancestry, had been united in life, and undivided in death. And let no one exclaim that we are drying up the sources of their anticipated joy. Instead of this, we are augmenting the resources of their felicity a thousand fold, by assuring them of the existence of attachments in heaven purer and stronger than are known to earthly consanguinity; and exercised, not toward the contracted group of a fireside, but toward the whole redeemed family of the Lord. Thus if we close the nether, we open upon you the upper springs, whence gush forth fountains of perennial joy. And at the same time that this is done, another object is accomplished. If all the affections of earth survive the grave, and live in heaven, while one is entranced with joy at finding one secure to whom he was attached by merely animal ties, will not the spirit of another shrink with anguish as he makes an opposite discovery? If attachments, other than spiritual are immortal, when the absence of their object is discovered, would there not be mourning in heaven? But as this is evidently incompatible with the delineations of the heavenly state given in the word of God, we are brought to the conclusion that the affections existing in heaven are purely spiritual, and

their object moral goodness. These attachments are, of course, mutual. There exists no unrequited love in heaven. The apostle who exclaimed, "the more I love you, the less I be loved," was not the first or last who has felt the pangs of unreturned attachment; but no one need cherish an apprehension of being cast out from the sympathies of the redeemed.

"That ghastly thought would drink up all their joy,
And quite unparadise the realms of light."

3. But what shall we say of the intellectual powers and employments of the finally saved? Are the former so improved, and the latter so ennobling as to render man in heaven materially different from man on earth? Are the transformations of his mental constitution sudden or gradual? Are *new* powers conferred upon him, or are his former ones simply improved and expanded? The most that we can reply is, that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." And it is not because we see any improbability, but because we lack positive information on the subject, — that we cannot subscribe to the theory so confidently advanced, and so elaborately illustrated and supported, by the modern philosopher of Scotland, (Dr. Dick.) There is no impropriety in supposing that new external senses, and new internal powers, may be conferred upon immortal man,—that he may possess facilities

for visiting distant worlds with greater ease than we can distant cities,—pass to the frontier stars that burn upon the suburbs of the system,—and fully understand the laws which govern their complicated movements. All this, we say, looks exceedingly plausible, but we dare not invoke conjecture to our aid because God has not seen fit positively and fully to inform us what we shall be. One thing is certain, that in the world of matter and of mind, there will be no lack of objects to investigate ; and if such investigation be adapted to the nature of the saint in heaven, and productive of felicity, there will be spread out before him an intellectual banquet in every part of the creation. And angels high in nature, and saints high by redeeming grace, will be at hand to lead him into the very depths of wisdom. To all this add the fact that the lamp of life will not go out in its socket, just as his investigations have commenced ; but will blaze in quenchless brightness, being fed from the river of life, and no reason can be offered why the humblest among you may not become like an angel in intellectual vigor, as well as in moral purity.

4. But man's highest felicity in the future world is to be wrought out by the perfection of his moral nature. In many respects we know not what we shall be ; but one thing we know,—we know that we shall be like God,—not like him in power, not like him in

wisdom, not like him in those lofty and incommunicable attributes of his nature—ubiquity and eternity,—but like him in purity. Transporting thought! we shall be like God, and drink forever at the fountain of holiness. This is the highest good after which mortals can aspire; one compared to which we “call the astonishing magnificence of unintelligent creation poor.” This is the good to secure which we relinquish our hold on earth. This is the good, to realize the full blessedness of which, “we bear to live or dare to die.” Who then would make earth his long and last abode? Who would wage an eternal war with earth and hell and sin?

“Who would not die to vanity, pain, death?

Who would not die? Who would not live forever?”

But from these consoling and inspiring views, we must turn to the reflection that we are still men, frail children of the dust, dwelling in a world of probation, temptation and sins. Though we may be princes elect, our coronation day has not yet come. Though candidates for a higher life, the certainty of attaining it hinges upon a fearful contingency. If we know not the full measure of heavenly felicity, neither do we know of a surety that we shall participate in it. A question, then far more particular in its nature, and more important for our consideration as regards our

individual preparation for heaven. What consequence can it be to you and me, that heaven is thus all glorious, if while the redeemed are to be admitted, we shall be thrust out? What matters it to us that heaven's pavements flash with heavenly light, if there is reserved for us the blackness of darkness forever? Heaven can only be reached by passing through the gates of death, and a triumphant, peaceful death can only be ensured by a life of righteousness. My heart is affected when I look over this congregation and remark how soon they will pass away. Remember the heroes of a thousand battles, and ask, can military prowess save you? Think of Sampson, and enquire, can physical strength avail? Call to mind Absalom, and demand, is beauty an effectual defence? Turn to Solomon's vacant throne, and learn that wisdom is no security. Look upon this sable pall, and learn that youth, and purity, and the fond hopes of friends, and the most determined attempts of medical skill, are no obstacles to the march of the "king of terrors," On, with ceaseless tramp he spurs his mighty steed, nor will he cease his work of death, until the last of human kind has fallen; and then in ghostly triumph will he rear his throne, on shattered hopes and broken hearts, exulting in the conquest of the race. But vain his triumphs! A stronger than the strong man armed has seized and bound him! Death is van-

quished in his own dominions, his charnel houses are unlocked, and his countless victims awaked from their slumbers — “the good to a resurrection into life, the evil to a resurrection of damnation.” Jesus “is the resurrection and the life,” and he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so also they that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.” Then shall be answered the Saviour’s prayer, “Father I will that those whom thou hast given me shall be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” Then shall be more fully and perfectly revealed, that which now so dimly appears. The star of hope now glimmering over the grave, shall expand to a sun which shall fill the whole view in the radiance and glory of which the spirit shall bask away eternity.

But how with those who do not believe in Jesus ? How with those who finally neglect and reject him ? To such, I bring no message of hope. To such I can only say that as it doth not fully appear what the righteous will be ; so the bitterness and aggravation of the sinner’s doom, are doubtless such as words are too poor to paint. Die, temporally, you must ; die eternally you need not. Choose the portion which pious Mary chose ; love the Saviour she loved ; and then when your flesh and your heart shall fail, God

will be "the strength of your heart and portion forever."

SERMON VI.

THE RECORD OF OUR NAMES IN HEAVEN.

Luke x: 20.—Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Besides the twelve disciples originally selected by our Lord as the witnesses of his life and death, and the propagators of his religion, seventy were subsequently employed to go upon a special and temporary mission. They were instructed to go into those cities and villages of Judea which Christ proposed soon to visit, as so many John the Baptists, to "prepare the way of the Lord." They were armed with miraculous powers, and while in one sense they were the *heralds*, in another they were the *representatives* of the Savior; for in his name they cast out devils and performed many wonderful works. Elated beyond measure at their newly acquired powers, they hastened back and informed Jesus that even the devils were subject to them through His name. Our Savior evinces no surprise at their success, but calmly informing them that he had seen Satan fall as lightning

from heaven, and his usurped power broken, reinvested them with their power over fallen spirits, empowered them to tread serpents and scorpions beneath their feet ; but at the same time mildly reminds them that they should not find their highest occasions of joy in their power and dignity, but rather in the fact that their names were written in heaven. This language has been usually regarded as metaphorical ; and we must array ourselves against all Biblical critics were we to contend for its literal interpretation. The number of passages which speak of the “book of life” is so great that it requires no great stretch of the imagination or faith to conceive that a book, a real bona-fide book, may be kept in heaven, in which are recorded the names of all God’s children. Men may smile at the idea as a novel one, but may they not with equal reason smile at the idea of literal palms, and crowns and thrones—of literal bodies, and of a local heaven ? To our own mind the idea that there are no books in heaven is by no means an agreeable one, while to one who has derived rich revenues of enjoyment from the volumes of human and divine wisdom, it is a grateful and elevating thought that many a library shall open to him its capacious alcoves, and that many a blissful hour will be passed, book in hand, beneath the spreading palms that flourish on the hills of immortality. The idea may be a fanciful, but it is a

pleasing one; and especially so far as it relates to an actual registry of the names of God's children in a volume called by way of eminence the book of life. The following are some of the Scriptures which convey this or a similar idea.

Psa. lxxix: 28.—“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”

Phil. iv: 3.—“And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.”

Rev. xx: 12 and 15.—“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life.” “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

But if a literal interpretation of these passages be not admissible, the sentiment still remains, that all the children of God are known in heaven, and are dear to the heart of the Savior.

“High on his everlasting throne,
The king of saints his works surveys;
Marks the dear sons he calls his own,
And smiles on the peculiar race.”

This fact is presented to us in the text as the foun-

dation of our most extatic joy, as the theme of our loftiest songs.

To rejoice is at once the duty and the high prerogative of the child of God. Though mourning be the common language of mortals,—and though there be written on the earth's broad surface, and on the skies which spread their canopy over it, as was written on the scroll which Ezekiel saw, "mournings and lamentations and woe," yet his privilege is still to rejoice. "No changes of season or place," no vicissitudes of fortune, no fluctuating friendships, no possible combination of circumstances, have power to abate the intensity of his joys. As earth cannot kindle, so it cannot extinguish this flame. As circumstances do not create, so they cannot destroy his happiness. As none but God can write my name in heaven, so none but *He* can blot it out. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice," is the exhortation of one whose experience demonstrated its practicability. Mark his imprisonment at Phillippi. With his back bleeding from recent inflictions of the lash, immured in the recesses of a dungeon, with his feet confined in the stocks, yet did he make the night vocal with his songs of praise. How strangely does this contrast with that piety which alternates with every varying breeze, which is elevated or depressed as the thermometer rises or falls, which can live only in the sunshine, but is

blighted by the frost, and prostrated by the storm. Why should our enjoyments be the sport of circumstances, when God, who is our refuge, and Hope which is our anchor, and Heaven which is our home, remain unalterably the same? As spiritual joy is the offspring of spiritual considerations and influences alone, why may not the Christian “rejoice evermore?”

Has Providence with a bountiful hand spread blessings around you? Have there been opened before you avenues leading to wealth and great prosperity? Has everything succeeded according to your wish? Rejoice not that thy barns are filled with plenty, that thy presses burst out with new wine, that the fatness of the earth and the increase of silver and gold has been thine,—rejoice not at this; for riches take to themselves wings and fly away. Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Have you been honored with the friendship of the great and good? Do kind friends wait like ministering spirits along your path, and anticipate your every wish? Are you every where saluted with a smile of welcome, with greetings in the market places, and are you called of men “Rabbi, Rabbi.” Rejoice not in this, for human friendship is an ephemeral thing; but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Has the volume of wisdom been spread before you,

and have you gleaned large revenues of knowledge from its ample pages? Have you had access to seats of science, and to all the treasures of knowledge which past ages have accumulated? Exult not at this, for “tongues shall cease and knowledge shall vanish away;” but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Does the glow of health flash upon thy cheek? Is your constitution vigorous and unimpaired? Has no fierce disease, no wasting pain made inroads upon your system? Rejoice not at this, for this trial *yet* awaits thee. Thou art *yet* to experience all this.

Thy sparkling eye, and rosy cheek,
Shall wither like the blasted rose;
The coffin, shroud, and winding sheet,
Shall soon thy active limbs enclose.

But lift your heads rejoicing, and clap you joyful hands, for you are redeemed forever from death’s triumphant hands,” if your names are recorded in the Lamb’s “book of life.”

Are you happy in your domestic relations? Have you a kind husband, an affectionate wife, indulgent parents, or dutiful children? Does affection glow at your hearth-stone, and sparkle around your table? Are your sons like plants grown up in their youth, and your daughters like corner stones fashioned after the similitude of a palace? Rejoice not, for that hap-

py. circle will be broken up. Those streams issuing from a common rock shall roll to opposite oceans—those leaves flourishing upon a common twig, shall be borne by conflicting winds to the ends of the earth. Death, too, will thin those happy ranks; that promising son, that blooming daughter is marked for the grave; but though the grass wither and flowers fade, and friends die, yet the “word of the Lord abideth forever,” and the saint may still rejoice because his name is written in heaven.

Are you a member of the Church of Christ? Do you in company with them that keep holy day, frequently find your way to the house of prayer? Are you oftentimes refreshed with the waters that gush up in the sanctuary? The records made in the book of life may not exactly correspond with those made in the registers of the militant church. It is comparatively easy to secure the recording of our name here. The applicant deals with fallible man, who, in numerous instances, cannot judge of his qualifications, who must take many things upon trust, look with a lenient eye upon many delinquencies, and hope that though the head is wrong, the heart is essentially right. Let no one then, particularly exult that his name is written on the records of the earthly church, nor even that he has secured its chiefest offices and honors. Distin-

guished as is this honor, exalted as are the privileges to which it introduces him, yet let him rejoice with trembling. Though he may have said "Lord! Lord!" prophesied, and done many wonderful works in the Saviour's name. Yet fruitless search for *his* name may be made in the records of the upper church. But if his name be written there, he may "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Is the Church of your choice in great prosperity? Is the banner of the cross advancing and winning bloodless victories over the empire of darkness? Do the harbingers of the millennial morning begin to glean upon the darkness of time? It is well; but do not forget your individuality while exulting at the triumphs of the Church, nor merge your piety in that of the multitude. Still be it the occasion of your *highest joy* that your names are written in heaven.

Nay, are the devils subject to you through the Saviour's name? Can you without harm drink of the poisoned cup, and on the scorpion tread? Obedient to your word are the mountains uprooted from their base and buried in the distant sea? Prompted by holiest sympathy, do you give all your goods to feed the poor, and is your zeal so great that you can give your body to be burned? Ground not here your most rapturous joy, but rather that your names are written in heaven.

Men have even been ambitious to make their names immortal. They have erected monuments of brass and granite as memorials to coming generations that once they lived. Go to Westminster Abbey, and you may read the names of Heroes and Philosophers, of Orators and Poets which the world will not let perish. The tomes of a thousand libraries evince the desire of their respective authors to make their names travel down to coming generations. The Kings of Egypt recorded theirs in the time-defying pyramids. Napoleon wrote his on the cloud-piercing Alps. Newton made his immortal by wreathing it in the prismatic hues of the rainbow. Herschel climbed higher and with star light wrote his own among the constellations.

But oh ! ye Lazaruses and Dorcases, ye sons and daughters of adversity, ye chosen of the Lord, whose names have never traveled beyond your firesides, who living are unknown and dying are forgotten—rejoice ! for though uneulogized mortals, your names are written in heaven.

Are you a child of sorrow ? Did misery steal you at your birth and east you helpless on the wild ? Has misfortune tracked you through all your life ? Has poverty haunted you with its gaunt form, and want invited you to set down to an empty board ? does famine blow mildew from between his shriveled

lips, and the storms of winter find you unsheltered and unclad? still with the exulting prophet you may exclaim, "Although the fig-tree should not blossom
..... and there be no fruit in the vine, though the labor of the olive should fail, and the fields yield no meat, though the flocks be cut off from the fold and the herds from the stall, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation."

Have you been disappointed in your pursuits after knowledge? Have you lamented that "learning to your eyes her ample page, rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll?" Or when the long sought prize was plucked from your grasp by a stranger's hand, have you exclaimed,

"Oh, who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where fame's proud temple shines afar,
Oh! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Hath felt the influence of malignant star,
Or waged with fortune a perpetual war?"

Be not dispirited. If you have entered the school of Christ you shall soon graduate to immortal honors, and stand associated with the general assembly and the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. Have you proved,

"How hard it is to find a friend
On whom you always can depend?"]

Have those who hung like parasites around your door

in the days of your prosperity, abandoned you in the hour of trouble, and those who did eat bread with you lifted up the heel against you? Be comforted, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Your adversities so far from abating *His* affections, or alienating *His* regards, will draw around you, yet closer, His protecting arm, and you shall be His in the day when He makes His jewels up. Do anxieties accumulate? Do cares multiply? Do storms of sorrow fall? Well, let them come,

"So we but safely reach our home,
Our God, our heaven, our all."

Has death entered our circles and borne away our cherished friends? Well,

"Let sickness blast, let death devour,
If heaven shall recompense our pains."

Cordial shall be our congratulations and sweet our union on the other shore.

Does age bow your spirit down, or is fell disease making fearful drafts upon your strength, and have you waded down into Jordan, yet? look away across the turbid stream. Behold those blooming mountains. Survey the golden city; and on its jasper walls read, oh! read thy humble name. Cry out, and shout, as you survey your glittering crown. Do men revile you, and persecute you and say all manner of

evil against you falsely for Christ's sake ; rejoice, and leap for joy, for great is your reward in heaven, for so prescuted they the prophets which were before you." In view of this subject, it is apparent that real happiness, such as lays the foundation for the most rapturous bursts of joy, is the result not of external circumstances, but of internal qualifications. It has its empire in the heart of its subject.

2. Our names are written in heaven, or they are not. It is evident that no inquiry can approach this in interest and magnitude. It is a matter of small concern whether my name be blazoned in the records of human greatness, whether men of other times shall drop a tear oe'r the tomb where my dust reposes ; but, oh ! it is a matter of infinite moment, to know whether my name is written in heaven. But is this a matter of which I can gain any knowledge before the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall open the book, and loose the seven seals thereof ? Oh ! must I wait in awful uncertainty as to my destiny, until the "great day of revelation ?" No ! I need not wait ; for the Spirit takes of the things of God and shows them unto us. Do not say the book of life is not open to thy inspection. Look within. Dost thou discover the image of thy Saviour ? Do you feel an identity of interests with those of his cause ? Do you pant to behold his glory ? Are you living a life of practical godliness, of prayer,

self-denial, faith, patience, charity ? Does the spirit attest that you are a child of God. Then is your name and memorial on high. Even if your names are recorded in the Lamb's book of life, they may be blotted out. If metaphors or literalities, teach any thing on this great point, they teach that our names though written in heaven may be erased, that others may take, and forever wear, our crowns. The Scriptures which indicate this possibility should fall with emphasis upon our ears, and go down to the depths of our hearts. As one's name is written at his birth in the public registry, and upon his death, it is blotted out ; so at conversion our names are written in heaven, but will be blotted out in the day of our apostacy. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." By holy vigilance, by incessant prayer, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for honor and glory, and immortality, and thus secure eternal life. Hear the precious promise of the Saviour, "He that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before the Father and before the Holy Angels. He that hath an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Do you want riches ? not in the clods of earth, nor

in the sparkling mine, nor in the marts of trade can it be secured ; but only by having your name recorded among the heirs of an immortal inheritance.

Do you desire honors ? Seek not the honor which cometh from man. Titles and honors must be laid aside to find true dignity.

“ The crown that decks a monarch,
Is not the crown for me,
It dazzles but a moment,
Its brightness soon will flee ;
But there's a crown laid up above,
The purchase of my Saviour's love,
Oh ! that's the crown for me.”

It is a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.” For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

SERMON VII.

THE END OF MAN.

(A NEW YEAR'S SERMON.)

Jer. v: 31.—What will ye do in the end thereof.

Prudence has always been reckoned among the cardinal virtues of life. Destitute of it, ruin, temporal and eternal, is certain to overtake any man. A young man may come into the possession of the amplest fortune, but if he has not forecast and caution, and a disposition to look forward to the ultimate issue of things, poverty and want will settle down upon his age and his feebleness. The fairest prospects will be blasted, and the best opportunities for doing good will be lost, without prudence and consideration. To see the end from the beginning, is alone the province of Omniscience; but to look toward the end, and seek to secure a final good, is the duty of all who have a futurity before them. At least this seems to be the duty of all rational beings to whom God has given a knowledge of things future, and who have the responsibilities of providing for their coming. It is an unfortunate state of things when a man will allow the current of his calculations, and plans, and purposes, to

be arrested "*in medias res*"—to stop short of the point where his interests and destiny ultimates.

The requirement "take no thought for the morrow" forbids the cherishing of inordinate anxieties in reference to our temporal interests—as to what we shall eat and drink; while the whole current of Scripture admonition and precept summon us to make adequate provision both for the life that now is and for that which is to come. The sluggard is exhorted to take lessons of the provident ant, which builds its house in summer and gathers its food in harvest; and in looking still farther on in the race of human life, God is represented as saying, "Oh, that men were wise, that they would remember this, that they would consider their latter end." We are now dwelling in the midst of an eventful life; a portion of it has become historical. It mingles with the irrevocable and changeless past. A moment, which passes while we think of it and speak of it, alone is ours. And while the future is in the main shaded in impenetrable haze, there are great bluff points lying along our course, rendered visible by light from eternity. These future events are dimly revealed by our spiritual intuitions; but clearly and definitely by the light of inspiration. It is only towards one of these events and that the most certain and important, I mean *the end of life*, that I direct your thoughts. Let me earnestly invite the va-

rious classes which compose my congregation to pause with me, and look forward to the swiftly coming close of life, with all its interests and affairs, and enquire "what shall we do in the end thereof?"

The present is a suitable period for such reflections and enquiries. We have come to the last day of another year.

1.—Let me speak in terms of tender and affectionate interest to the young. I do this the rather because I have hardly yet ceased to regard myself as among you and of you; I have not yet passed on so far in life as to have lost my interest in and my sympathy for young men. My heart throbs with your heart, the things which interest you interest me, and if God shall spare us we may float on into age together, and in places contiguous and at points of time not remote from each other, may make our descent into the tomb and our entrance into the eternal world. It is possible then that the things which have come to interest me should interest you also, that the course which on the whole I have judged it wise and right to pursue ought to have attractions for you also. But if I am wrong in my selection, if the current of my thoughts and habits be open to real objection, I desire to be set right, and to choose that path which true wisdom and discretion indicates, and which will be seen to be the

fitting one when experience shall have sharpened our perceptions and corrected our errors.

It is one of the infelicities of our condition that we cannot, or do not, avail ourselves largely of the experience of others; but require an experience of our own before we are fully assured of what is right and best. Would we allow the voice of our predecessors in the race of life to reach our ears and affect our lives, it might save us from many false and perhaps fatal steps; from many keen and perhaps unavailing regrets. Would the sons of probation listen to the voice of the rich man in hell they might be saved from going to that place of torment. Would they observe the death-bed scenes of the princes of infidelity, they would eschew skepticism and believe in Christ. Would they allow the voice of the dying drunkard to fall upon their ear, they would look only in disgust upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, knowing that *at the last* it "biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Did they know the end of those who follow the voice of the strange woman they would escape as a bird from the snare of the fowler, knowing that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell. But ruin results by looking only upon the beginning and progress of things and not at their final issues.

Sin sometimes takes the name of Pleasure. She

stands at the head of the highways of life, the portress of the wide gate, the patroness of the broad way. She is dressed in a flowing robe, a wreath of flowers is on her brow, and a wine cup in her hand. Winning is her smile and enticing her words. "Follow me (says the syren) and I will lead you in pleasant paths. In this road are bowers of ease and halls of pleasure; there are jovial companions and social delights; there are pleasures for the senses and pleasures for the soul."

And at first appearance it really seems that these are truthful representations. Those who have just entered the path seem to be happy. Their loud laugh falls on the ear, and the flowing bowl sends exhilarating sensations through all their frame. But judge carefully. Appearances are often deceptive. Could you look into those hearts you would see care and trouble and sorrow there; and were their workings embodied in actual acknowledgments, your pity would be elicited where your envy is now excited. But granting all that appearances indicate, and we have still to say "all's well that ends well." Said the philosopher to the king, "Let no man account himself happy until he is dead;" rather we would say until he is prepared to die. That is not a safe or a pleasant voyage which is taken amid rocks, peering to the surface, and whose terminus is shrouded in eternal fogs,

and lashed with ceaseless storms. Nor is that a safe or pleasant path pursued by the lover of pleasure. Thorns spring up in his road, pitfalls multiply at every step, the basilisk hisses in his path, and in an unexpected moment his steps slide, he takes a final and a fatal plunge, and disappears forever. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Again : I see a company of youth sit down to a game of chance. An innocent thing it seems to rattle a dice-box or shuffle a pack of cards. But what shall be in the end thereof? The love of play grows by indulgence to such dimensions, and acquires such power, that fortunes will be staked upon the throw of a die ; and while the blood boils with excitement, and the brain whirls with phrenzy, the wretched, ruined man goes forth into life a maniac, or down to his grave a suicide.

The licentious youth commences what seems to him a course of gayety and enjoyment. He puts no restraint upon his passions ; but allows his principles to be vanquished, his body and his mind to be enervated, and his soul polluted and poisoned ; but he shall *mourn at the last* when his flesh and his body are consumed, and say "how have I hated knowledge, and my heart despised reproof, and I would not listen to

the voice of my teachers, nor incline my ear to them that instructed me."

But take now the case of the young man of honorable associations, who shuns the company and the course of the inconsiderate classes referred to, and proposes to enter into honorable competition with his peers for the riches and pleasures of the world. Would it not be well for him too, to look forward and inquire what shall be in the end thereof. I meet a young man just at the entrance of the world and ask him of his employment. He is perhaps an apprentice at a trade, or a student in mercantile or commercial life. I ask him what course he intends to pursue when his noviciate is ended? To enter business on his own account. And what then? To prosecute with industry and enterprise his chosen calling. And what then? To settle in life, build him a house, gratify his taste and educate his children. And what then? Why, retire from business and pass the evening of his days in ease and plenty. Well, and what then? Why, of course, at last to *die*. Now the question I have to propose is, why allow your provisions to fail just at that point? Why provide even for the *contingencies* of life, and not for one of its absolute *certainities*? You provide for living, why not for dying? If death be the finality of every human enterprise—if all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave is perish-

ing—if every path of joy or sorrow, of fancy or glory leads but to the grave, why not take this into the account from the beginning? If death (as Dr. Chalmers says) is “a tremendous necessity,” why not prepare for it from the moment when it was announced to you as a possible event? Is it because death is remote. It may not be remote. It is not remote from all young men and women. It is awfully near to multitudes.

“Foremost at the banquet and the ball
Death leads the dance and stamps the deadly die
And never fails the midnight bowl to crown.”

Death is oftentimes present when least expected. At a moment when we look not for it, its gaunt form stalks into our midst to cut off our young men from without, and our children from the streets. A ubiquitous thing is death. But what if death were remote? True discretion requires that you provide for the remote as well as the proximate. It is none the less real because it is distant, and the interests of a thousand years hence should be as sacred in your regards as those of to-morrow. That distant future will become a present, possessing all the consciousness, all the sensibility, and all the earnest wants which belong to the passing day. You call that person very inconsiderate who cares and provides only for the present

moment. You condemn him not only by your words, but by your conduct, which is all regulated with reference to prospective wants. The very sagacity which enables you to lay the foundation of a fortune, to pave your way to success in life, would, if rightly employed, lead you to provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in heaven where no moth corrupteth and no thieves break through and steal.

2. All these reasonings apply in a modified form to the man in middle life. With him the heyday of youth has passed. As a sober autumn succeeds a blooming spring and an ardent summer, so an earnest, ripened manhood, treads hard upon the heels of smiling infancy and joyous youth. Manhood differs from youth not only in the more perfect development of the physical man, and in the maturity of judgment, acquired by observation, study and experience, but also in the great objects of its desire and pursuit. There are some passions, which from their very nature cannot always be indulged; or being indulged cannot be ministers of happiness. "I am," said Barzillai, "this day fourscore years old and can I discover between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" Youthful blood will not always throb in thy veins. As surely as gray hairs will flourish on thy brow, and time plough wrin-

kles on thy cheek, so surely will your imaginations droop, your fancies and preferences undergo changes, and life be presented to you in altered and sobered aspects. "Life is real, life is earnest." It has earnest duties, earnest cares, earnest sorrows, and many have earnest joys. The pressure of these duties and cares begin to be felt as you cut loose from your childhood home; just as the sailor feels the heavings of ocean's bosom when he weighshis anchor and strikes from the shore. And now I see you, fellow voyagers, a whole fleet of you, out midway on the waters of life. I hail you and inquire whither are you bound? and coming back from many a deck, and halyard, I hear the reply, "we are bound to Ophir the land of gold." Fellow navigators of life's great ocean, let us reason together. Let us inquire after the fate of the multitudes who have preceded us in this direction. A large number of them we may safely assert never reached their destination; of those who have, few have found their expectations answered; and of those few, only a fraction have long retained and enjoyed their long sought boon. To drop figures, let me ask how many of the earnest laboring multitudes around us attain the object of their pursuit? Not that many do not reach the goal of their early aspirations; but new wants have been evolved; new desires have been awakened, the eye now measures other leagues, and the

muscles are strung for another race. Tell me who of you have reached the limit of your desires, who of you have no further favors to ask of fortune? Does not he who is already filled to repletion still cry like the daughters of the horse leech, *give, give?* I have said that there are some passions which soon become seated; but love of power and of wealth are in their nature insatiable. They grow by what they feed on, so that while Alexander could weep that there was no other world to which he could extend the terror of his name and his arms, the rich man still sighs for added riches, and already laden down with earth's thick clay he piles heavy burdens upon his back and upon his heart. "What shall be done in the end thereof." Why, "the end of all these things is death." And how unfortunate the condition of him who "heaps up treasures here below, and dying, leaves them all behind." I have particularly specified the matter of gain because this is supposed to be the sin to which middle life is prone, particularly in this ultra-utilitarian age. But whatever be the manner in which you employ and expend your energies, still the inquiry is relevant "what shall be in the end thereof." Autumn with you is passing away, winter is coming on. Your steps approach the graveyard. Cast about after the final issue of things. Your sun is declining. It will descend very rapidly. It will not roll back-

ward like the shadow in the dial of Ahaz, nor hang suspended in the heavens as in the days of Joshua. On rolls the golden orb strong as a giant to run a race. Soon it will go down behind the darkened west and disappear forever. Shall it set in everlasting darkness, or shall it reappear again and shine forever in the kingdom of heaven?

An aged man was once gathering boughs in the forest. He laid a load upon his shoulders and found it very heavy. He laid it off for a moment, cut other boughs, added them to the heap, and then resumed his burden. But now his bending frame could scarce sustain the added load; he staggered on a little way, and then throwing down his burden he plied his axe and added the thickly falling branches to the enormous heap. Once more he succeeded in lifting the crushing load, but soon it bore him down, his steps failed, and he sunk to rise no more.

You say this is an allegory; I admit it; but does it not correctly indicate the conduct of the sinner who knows that he must repent or perish? A load of sin presses him down. He pauses and surveys with concern his enormous burden, and then adds to it the responsibility and sin of another year; he binds sin to him with cords and iniquity with cart-ropes, until overborne with the intolerable load, he sinks *lower* than the grave.

Shall I then say to the business man, suspend or abandon your business? No! If it be a lawful and honorable business, I say to him, attend to it and be diligent in it. Dismiss your *over-anxieties*, but by diligence and economy gain and save what is necessary for life and godliness, and to enable you to exercise that crowning grace of charity, without which no man e'er entered heaven. But let me further enquire what *is* the business of a man bound to eternity, and destined to live forever? Evidently not to neglect the spiritual while providing for the physical man, not to ignore God, and his law, and the judgment day, and the eternal world, while providing for the interests of this fleeting life. These things ought to be done and not to leave the other undone. Come, then, ye strong men. Devote your manly energies to the service of God and the good of your race. Labor not alone for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life.

3. Have I failed to command the assent of the young and the middle aged to the rectitude of the Divine claim? have I failed to awaken a purpose in their hearts to give to God the things which are God's? then will I turn with sorrowing steps to that aged pilgrim band that I see far down the vale of life. They are a small company; the greater proportion of their number have passed on before. Those that remain

are but the wrecks of what they were. Evil days have come upon them, and the years draw near when they find no pleasure. The keepers of their house tremble, their strong men bow themselves, their windows are darkened, the sound of the grinders ceases, and their head blossoms like the almond tree. Their pitcher is being broken at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern; their dust is just ready to return to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God, who gave it. Surely they will heed my voice; surely the ties of life hold feebly here, and those so near to the eternal world will be induced to enquire what shall be in the end of a life so nearly completed? "But the tree of deepest root is found."

Another fact, an alarming fact, here also discloses itself. I allude not so much to the fact that age is a second childhood, a driveling dotage, which is incapable of forming or executing any great achievement either physical or moral; but to the fact that habits have then acquired such strength, the mentalities have become not only so impaired but so obstinate, and the affections not only so languid but so wayward, that nothing less than Almighty Grace can vanquish the perversities of a will so long indulged, restrain the vagaries of an imagination so long allowed to run riot, purify that great charnel house of impurities—the

memory—and turn the tide of the affections from earth to heaven. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots, then may one long accustomed to do evil learn to do well.” In some palmy day of the church yet future, it is announced that a *child* shall die an hundred years old; but it is added that the sinner being an hundred years shall be accursed. If youth has its strong excitement, and manhood its multiplied cares, age has its accumulated transgressions and its invincible habits. And yet we must not renounce all hope nor suspend our efforts for their salvation. I call to you aged pilgrims, standing just at the mouth of the opening tomb, “What will ye do in the end thereof.”

And inasmuch as the time of our death is an uncertainty, as it may be as near to one of you who are young as to the middle aged, and to both as to the old, all are concerned to know how it shall be with them at the end of life. Are you anticipating a peaceful death? What is the foundation of this anticipation? Do you possess a renewed heart, and are you leading a holy life? Remember that what a man soweth he shall also reap; that he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Plant yourselves for one moment in the midst of the judgment scenes. Dare to anticipate and

provide for an event which is so certain and so near. You need not wait to know what will be your sentence. You *can* determine and *will* determine this in advance. You know now whether you are prepared for the judgment day or not. You will know when you come to die whether you are ready for that tremendous issue. In a little while the last of earth will come. In a few days the clods of the valley will cover you. But not even your bodies will forever slumber in the grave a voice louder than ten thousand thunders speaking in emphatic concert, shall pour its thrilling larum on the dull, cold ear of death, and all that slumber in the earth or in the sea, shall come forth. The dust reposing beneath the gorgeous monument, that which fills the sculptured urn, and that which is marked by no memorial, shall all become animate ; all the dead shall be raised, and all the living changed. Nor is the resurrection scene a finality in human history. We shall be raised that we may be judged, and judged, that we may be rewarded or punished. Only when we shall have been swept on to, and beyond the judgment day, shall we have reached results which are final. Nor are any of these scenes which lie on the frontiers of time, and which are embosomed in great eternity, things to be dreaded. Death is the means by which God colonizes heaven. The resurrection is the process of becoming immortal. The

coming of Christ, the triumphant advent of our heavenly bridegroom. The judgment is our coronation-day.

SERMON VIII.

TO DIE, GAIN.

Phil. 1 : 21—"To live is Christ, and to die is gain."

In whatever enterprise man engages, he is mainly stimulated by the hope of promoting his interests, widening the field of his usefulness, or enlarging the resources of his happiness. Prompted by these mighty impulsions, there are no labors too great to be undertaken, no dangers too appalling to be encountered, and no obstructions too formidable to be overcome. But of the three motives enumerated, probably that of interest is far the most potent in its influence, and by far the most general in its operation. A few may be mainly desirous of being useful; a still larger number inquire, "where can pleasure be most successfully sought?" while the masses, greedy only after gain are prepared to sacrifice upon the altars of mammon their ease, their health, their homes.

To secure "gain" every avocation has been resorted to, every sea has been crossed, and every

mountain barrier scaled. The miner has penetrated the bosom of the earth, and the diver has brought up the treasures of the sea. And when the ordinary sources of gain prove unproductive, man has not scrupled to resort to the more sanguinary measures of rapine and violence. The hope of gain not only sweetens the labors of the peasant, but sharpens the dagger of the assassin, and the sword of the conquered.

But there is one process of securing "gain" of which men have seldom thought, namely the process of "dying." Men have said "to live is gain," "to labor is gain," but who have ever thought or said "to die is gain?" Hobb, when about to die, said, "I am going to take an awful leap into the dark," and Socrates when sentence of death was pronounced upon him, exclaimed, "And now, oh! ye judges! you are going to live, and I am going to die, but which of these conditions is best, God knows, but I suppose no man does." But far different the joyful and confident exclamation of the Apostle, "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain. I have a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better." Let us endeavor to trace this feeling to its origin, and learn what that principle is, which thus grapples successfully with death, and not only holds the pale king in abeyance, but obtains a conquest over him.

The sentiment of my text is not a dictate of natu-

ral religion ; nature teaches no such truth. It makes death the greatest possible calamity. I look upon the dying man. I mark how disease has reduced him to a mere wreck of what he was. The strength of his arm and the beauty of his countenance are gone. I hear his husky and scarcely articulated tones. I watch his slow and scarce returning breath, and I ask what can be gained by passing through agonies like these? What great end can be wrought out by these dying struggles? And when the stillness of death has settled down upon those wan features, I renew my inquiries and ask "what has been gained?" With Cicero I exclaim "tell me how there is no evil in death." The torch which ancient revelation held over the grave was a flickering one. So dim and uncertain was the light it emitted that while the Sadducees acknowledged the truthfulness of the Jewish Scriptures, they yet denied the resurrection of the dead, although the resurrection and future state were doctrines which were inwrought into the very texture of the writings of Moses and the prophets, and were great first truths the admission of which was essential to religion ; yet the faded lines which portrayed immortal man, had to be drawn afresh before life and immortality were revealed. And this is done in the New Testament. This sheds the light of certainty over the grave. It holds a clear and steady torch at the portals of the

tomb which shines into eternity. It not only confirms the fact stated in the old dispensation, that if a man die he shall live again, but it makes such glorious discoveries of the state of the blessed as to justify the yearning desire of the apostle to depart and be with Christ.

But what has all this to do with others? Paul makes this assertion of himself alone, “for *me* to die is gain.” All that the Scriptures tell me of a resurrection and of a future state, it is quite conceivable *may* be a death-knell to all my hopes. Prove to me that I am immortal and you have conferred a very equivocal boon. You have put me in possession of a terrible secret. The poor privilege of sinking away into annihilation was all that I had before, but of that you have robbed me by demonstrating that I am to live on, but without informing me *where* or under what circumstances I shall continue my existence.

“To die is gain”—but to whom? Is it gain for him to die who looks upon death as the extinction of being, whose motto through life has been “Death is an eternal sleep”? This is the heaviest calamity which can overtake him. Not but that annihilation would be preferable to eternal woe; but it is far less desirable than life. A gloomy prospect at best it is to be hid forever in the grave. A melancholy thought it is

to have the lamp of life extinguished in eternal darkness. But this is not all that makes death unlovely to the sceptic. There is a certain undefined but yet resistless impression on his mind that "it is not all of death to die." Conscience makes cowards of us all by whispering about *something after death*. Add these two ideas together and you can readily understand how it is that to the infidel "It is a dread and awful thing to die."

Take now the case of the mere man of the world, the individual who has made this world his ideal, and has his affections and his heart exclusively set upon it. Is it gain for *him* to die? How can it be? His interests all lay here! His hopes are bounded by time, and whatever lies beyond is without the range of his interests. They consist of things visible and tangible; and to lose *these* is all that he accounts valuable. Well, now, the dying man must quit his hold on all these earthly possessions. He brought nothing into this world, but his capacities. He can carry nothing out but his character.

"Earth's proudest trophies end with "here he lies,"
And "dust to dust" concludes his noblest song."

— If now he has never had any other God than this world, how is death any gain to him? It is said that Cræsus, a Lydian king, who was famous for his love

of money, having been made prisoner by Cyrus, was put to death by having molten gold poured down his throat, his tormenting captor standing by and exclaiming "thou who couldst not be satisfied with gold have now thy fill." Earthly possessions to the dying man are valueless as chaff, which the wind driveth away. Nay, wealth makes dying hard, not only because to leave it is to leave all which has been accounted valuable, but because it has disqualified its possessor for the enjoyment of purer and loftier joys. He is better fitted to admire

"The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught Divine, or holy, else enjoyed,
In beatific vision."

But to whom then is it gain to die? To him around whose dying bed clusters the sweet visions of eternal life. To him whose ear is ravished with celestial harmonies. And not only to the saint thus honored with an *extatic* death; all who die in the Lord are blessed, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

Now life and death are both blessings to the christian. Both are antecedents to heavenly rest. Life is the stadium, death the goal, and heaven the reward of the good man. Life is the vestibule, and death is the gateway to the skies. Hence the christian

Thanks God that e'er he drew his breath,
And triumphs in the thoughts of death.

A love of life is natural to man. It was implanted in his bosom by his Creator. But for this, suicides instead of being strange and unwonted events, would be the common and early outlets of life. And it is generally observed that this attachment to life loses nothing by the rush of years.

Age, with its feebleness and its pains, still holds on to life.

“The tree of deepest root is found
Least willing still to quit the ground,
Twas therefore said by ancient sages
That love of life grows strong with years,
So much that in our later stages,
When pains grow sharp and sickness rages,
The greatest love of life appears.”

But this reluctance to die, grace can overcome. In thousands of instances it has overcome it, not only in cases of the bright names that adorn the ancient church, but in every age has the Christian proved himself the hero of the grave. It enabled him to embrace the stake and exclaim, “Welcome, cross of Christ! Welcome, everlasting life!” The hissing and flickering flame had no power to intimidate such fearless spirits. And this is not the effect of dogged resolution forcing itself up to the point of submitting to inexorable necessity. It is not the marshalling of

the soul's natural fortitude, a yielding when resistance can no longer avail. It is the trusting of the soul in the hands of Christ, where its weakness becomes the source of its strength, and its submission the means of its conquest.

But what does the Christian gain by dying? He secures two great objects, namely, a deliverance from present evils, and positive and permanent bliss in heaven. The evils escaped and the blessings secured by death we are very inadequate to enumerate. Some of them, however, may be briefly stated.

1. He secures a deliverance from all those physical evils and inconveniences which are necessarily connected with his present mode of existence. He finds a secure asylum from the storms and tempests of earth. He is eternally housed in the mansions where the heats of summer and the colds of winter affect him not.

2. He secures a retreat from dominions where suffering and death hold usurped, but universal dominion, and effects a retreat to the land where disease has lost its power to annoy, and death is swallowed up in victory.

3. He passes from a world of uncongenial society to the pure and elevated companionship of the spirits of just men made perfect.

4. He exchanges the ephemeral friendships of earth

for those which, instead of waning with advancing years, and wearying with intimacy, acquire strength and depth while eternity makes its endless revolutions.

5. He is freed from those earthly employments which, though essential to his present mode of existence, tend to secularize the soul, and make such large demands upon its time and its energies.

6. The clogs upon the intellect, which incapacitate it for lofty attainments, will be thrown off, and the soul be at liberty to pursue its investigations without impediment or restraint.

7. Disappointments, which were so frequent and so severe in this life, obscuring his brightest hopes and embittering his sweetest cups, are things unknown in that bright world to which he has ascended.

8. But these are the lesser evils from which he has escaped. There is a class of obstacles that dampen his faith, clip the wings of his devotion, and clog the spirit in its attempts to hold communion with God. Who has not been conscious of hindrances to a growth in grace? Who has not felt how hard it is at some times to bring the soul into communion with its Maker? The wing of the soul is so unfledged, the obstacles thrown in his path are so frequent and so formidable, that he is constrained to mourn over the tardy

movements of his soul, and that his advances in holiness are slow. He oftentimes sings,

“Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these earthly toys,
Our souls how heavily they go,
To reach eternal joys.”

But complete deliverance from these impediments will be secured by exchanging mortality for life. The soul, now so slow in its movements, will enter at once into rapt communion with its God, never to be broken off again to all eternity.

9. The soul of the Christian, even of the best Christian, is here subject to temptation from the devil. What though we see not the fell spirits that lurk about us. They are around us still. They track us while we wake and when we sleep, and seek opportunities, at every unguarded moment, to pierce our hearts with their poisonous arrows. Cruel as the grave, sleepless as the fabled Argus, subtle, powerful and numerous, they throng around us, bent upon our ruin. No escape from their temptations except by crossing the river of death. “There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.”

But all the Christian gains by dying is not of a negative character. There are fountains of positive and permanent felicity that gush up all along his pathway through eternity. God will see to it that

the Christian's heaven is all that is needful to constitute him blessed. In the presence of God there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Heaven is the concentration of every joy—the realization of every hope—the full answer to ten thousand prayers—the satisfying portion of the soul. In its duration it knows no other limits than eternity; and, during the mighty sweep of ages unending, shall communications of grace be made to the redeemed spirit. We may learn,

1. That high moral and spiritual qualifications are necessary to secure a peaceful and triumphant death. Philosophy may boast of its fortitude in calamity—courage may nerve the heart of the warrior on the field of carnage and of death, but Christian principle and spiritual endowments only, prepare the heart for a tranquil and joyful exchange of mortality for life.

2. The Scriptures make an obvious distinction between the death of the Christian and of the sinner. "The wicked shall be driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." But "when a wicked man dieth his expectation shall perish." Such Scriptures look like the cloud which lay between the Israelites and the Egyptians, presenting a dark side to the lat-

ter, to trouble and bewilder them, and to the former an aspect luminous and brilliant, to encourage and to guide them. They represent death as Pharaoh's goal-er, leading forth the chief butler and the chief baker, one to dignity and honor ; the other to ignominy and death. God has ever honored the death of his people with consolation and hope, and not unfrequently with raptures of joy. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

"How sweetly sets the Christian's sun,
Just as the summer monarch sets
Midst cloudless skies, his journey run,
To rise in higher regions yet.

Oh ! when the Christian ends his days,
Lingers a lovely line of rays
That speaks his calm departure blest,
And promises to those who gaze
The same beatitude of rest."

EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

SERIES.—TEN SERMONS.

SERMON IX.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

Psalms xiv : 1.—The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

1. I shall begin this series of discourses by a remark going to vindicate the practice of doctrinal preaching. Any objection to this will be obviated by the reflection that doctrinal preaching is not necessarily *controversial*, but is in its tendencies necessarily *practical*.

The sublime doctrines of the Holy Scriptures have not been revealed to gratify curiosity, but to affect the hearts and influence the lives of men.

2. The doctrines of religion are nothing but statements of *facts*. The *present* seems to be ground common to both doctrines and facts. Here they meet and blend and lose themselves in identical elements and principles, while the *past* is the exclusive domain of facts, and the *future* of doctrines.

The Creation is a *fact* ;

The conflagration, a *doctrine*.

The flood of Noah is a *fact* ;

The final judgment, a *doctrine*.

And as we are more concerned with the future than the past,—as we are to be swept into the scenes of coming time, it does not become us to ignore or disregard the revelation of them.

3. By doctrines we mean of course the doctrines of revelation ; and hence the Scriptures must be the source of all our information. To be sure, *after* God hath spoken in his word, if nature utter a confirmatory voice, we gladly listen to it. But how unwise to interrogate uncertain analogies, and follow reason first, and then press revelation into the service of theories learned elsewhere. The only appropriate question for a believer in revelation, when searching for truth, is, “What is written in the law?” All other informants are bidden to wait until God hath spoken.

4. Objection is sometimes made that the doctrines of revelation are not unfolded in their order, but are scattered through the Bible. This accords with God’s general manner of teaching truth. We need the discipline which it requires.

5. In prosecuting our inquiries we should discard all prejudice and come with the docility of pupils to an infallible preceptor. We are not to sit in judgment on the word of God ; but to receive with meek-

ness the ingrafted word which is able to save our souls.

If in demonstrating the divine existence we do not regard the Scriptures as our great source of proof, it is because none who admit their inspiration need an argument at all. The atheist of course repudiates the Bible, and we can only come to him with the book of nature. The Bible indeed never *proves*, nor even *asserts* the being of a God; it always *assumes* it, as an anterior and unquestioned truth. The first verse ascribes creation to Him, as though the evidences of his being had been presented in some "clear Scripture writ by God's own hand."

The heathen gives no heed to the Scriptures of which he knows nothing, nor the atheist to a Book of which he believes nothing. In dealing with each I must point to the primal proofs of Jehovah's being and power, which his works furnish, and having demonstrated that there is a God of Infinite Attributes it at once becomes both a *possible* and a *probable* thing that he has spoken to men. We are then prepared to attend to the evidences which affirm that he *has* thus spoken, and this proven, we have in our hands the infallible standard of truth; the unfailing fountains of saving knowledge gush up around us.

If our attempts to demonstrate the existence of God should fail, it is consoling to know that every attempt

to prove that there is no God must also fail. *Theism can never be proved false ; Atheism can never be proved true.* On this subject man can never travel beyond the regions of unbelief into those of positive disbelief. He may be dissatisfied with the evidence that there is a God ; but he must admit that there is no positive evidence that there is no God. It is always difficult to prove a negative ; and in this case it is plainly impossible to do so. He who can affirm this, and prove it, must be *a God himself.* For,

1. He must be certain not only that no evidences of the divine existence surround him, but that they do not exist *any where.* (One human footprint on an island) To know this he must go *every where.* He must leave the green earth, the pale moon, the bright sun, or a family of stars, study each and all, sweep to the frontier stars, and mount the wall that overlooks the vale of non-existence. He must be prepared to say he has been every where, seen every thing, conversed with every spirit—that there is absolutely no evidence, *any where,* that there is a God. If his tour were less extensive, or his observations less critical, his conclusions cannot be admitted ; for on that unvisited world may be concentrated the proofs of a first great Cause.

2. And these observations must be carried on in *every place at the same time.* For sufficient proofs of

the Divine existence may be presented at some assigned point, if the enquirer were only present to examine them. But before he reaches that point these evidences may be shifted to a remote part of the Universe. He must then be in *all places* at the *same period*; or what would answer the same purpose, he must occupy some post of observation, whence he can sweep across the entire fields of space with a single glance of his eye. Then only could he say there is *now* no evidence *any where* for the being of a God.

3. Again, he must be able not only to survey all the *present* but absolutely to know all the *past*. What if no proof of the existence of God can *now* be found, how do I know but they may have been furnished to all past generations.

He must traverse the plain which stretches backward to the birth of time, and be able to affirm that never since the first morning star awoke, and sang its matin song, did *one* proof exist of the existence of a Great First Cause. For if such evidence ever existed, the great truth is established, even if the window of Heaven whence the outbeaming glory emanated were that moment closed forever.

4. He then who can affirm that there is no God must possess these qualifications; an ability to visit every part of the universe, to be present in all places at the same time, power to know the records of every

past event; to which must be added, an ability of tracing causes and consequence, without the possibility of error. In other words, he must have existed from the beginning of time, he must know all things, be able to do all things, dwell in every place, in short, possess every natural attribute of Deity. So true is it that he who can say "there is no God" is a God himself. He who does say it (says David) is a fool.

5. Compared with the arduous task of the Atheist, ours is easy. We have but to examine some definite territory and by a most direct process demonstrate the eternal power and Godhead of Him who scattered there such a profusion of glories.

(1.) We insist not here on the thousand combinations of matter which surround us; we dwell not on evident adaptations and designs everywhere apparent. But we point to the things which are made, and ask, "who made them?" Take the smallest particle of matter, the small dust of the balance, and tell me whence came it? Not all the combined power of man, aided by all the mechanical and chemical processes of science, could *create* that grain. The argument with the Atheist is short and simple. Here are *effects*. It is insisted they must have a *cause*. A *design* implies a *designer*.

(2.) Look now at matter in some of its combinations. Here is a *flower*. It sprang but yesterday

from the earth, yet Solomon was not thus arrayed. Here is a *bird*; how bright its plumage, and how sweet its song. Here is a *world*, with its mountains and its oceans. In its bosom is the untold wealth of the mineral kingdom; on its surface, waving harvests, and flocks, and herds, and multitudes of men. Above me is sun and moon and stars. At night, there is spread before me a scene of wondrous beauty and grandeur. "Oh! what a confluence." And yet man can lift himself up in this great temple of Jehovah and deny the being of its builder!

Sir Isaac Newton once invited a sceptic to examine a pair of beautiful artificial globes and affirmed that they were chance work. Suppose I take you to see a palace in a forest and profess to believe that it chanced to be erected.

This argument is so convincing that heathen often see its force. The Arab—and camel tracks in the sand. The Indian—praying to the maker of the sun. And it requires only some instructed hand to touch the appropriate chord in a heathen's soul and his hoary systems melt away and *God* is throned in his breast. See the great movement in China. "The heavens declare the glory of God to them as well as unto us." To all the song of nature is, "the hand that made us is divine." "God's hand unseen sustains the poles."

We have but just hinted at the evidence which

meets our gaze wherever we look. Nature pleads for this truth with a thousand tongues. Every little flower discourses of God. "Every thing that has breath," from the grasshopper that sings, &c., to the Behemoth that draws up Jordan, is a volume of Theology; and man is the supplement with one thousand additional arguments. The sculptor can never equal the original. He may make an eye, an ear, a vein, &c. Let the Atheist read—and be an Atheist still. Let him read the poetry of heaven. Who guides their motions and prevents such concussions as would set the universe ajar? "Do world's unguarded in their orbits fly?" Thus the heavens declare the glory of God. Man's moral nature demands a God.

1. If Atheism even be true, a future and immortal existence for man may also be true. This world *exists*—so may another. Man now *is*—he *may be hereafter*.

2. In either case the wicked may well tremble. If earth is by chance—*hell* may be also. If God is—and is the avenger of sin, "It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands." "I am afraid there is a God," "rocks, &c."

3. But to the righteous the name of the Lord is his delight. Passing through the valley of death the rod of his shepherd comforts him; and in heaven his ever growing joy will be to join the swelling diapason, Hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

SERMON X.

UNITY OF GOD.

I Cor. viii : 4,—“ There is none other God but one.”

The fact that there is a God being established the question arises, may there not be more than one ? Though Atheism is certainly false, may not Dualism or Polyth-ism be true ? To us this question may seem to be of very easy solution, and yet it is certain that large portions of the world, even of the learned world, have wandered bewildered here in endless mazes lost. Idolatry is traceable to a very high antiquity. The first form of it was the worship of the *sun*. This was natural, regarding the sun as the beneficent source of light, and heat and fruitfulness. The sun might at first have been regarded as an *emblem* of deity and worshipped subordinately ; but the tendency of idolatry is to degeneracy, and soon the sun was the supreme object of worship ; and *fire* as its *representative* was also worshipped. This is the present form of worship in Persia. *Fire* is regarded as sacred, and worshipped as divine. The first account of idolatry in the Scriptures is among the ancestors of Abraham of whom Joshua says that they served other Gods beyond the flood. They, however, renounced their idolatry and

accompanied Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, on their way to Canaan.

Laban, the father-in-law of Jacob, appears to have been an Idolater, for Rachel in her flight, stole his "images" which he calls his "Gods." Every account which we have of the nations of those early times represents them as idolaters. The Moabites worshipped Chemosh, the Ammonites, Moloch, the Philistines, Dagon, while Baal was worshiped by the Canaanites, the Phenicians, Sidonians, Carthagenians, Babylonians, &c.

The Israelites, early fell into Idolatry, and for this sin they were often and sorely punished. The two first commands of the Decalogue are against Idolatry, the first that of the mind, the second against image worship. Egypt the parent of the sciences, was one of the most idolatrous of nations. They not only had their celestial divinities as Osiris and Iris, but they worshipped beasts, reptiles and vegetables. The more refined but no less idolatrous Roman, lampooned Egypt as the holy nation where *gardens bear a crop of Gods, &c.*

Greece and Rome are regarded as standing high in the rank of civilization. Never did the world produce superior orators, poets, sculptors, or scientific men. But how humbling to admit that they were all idolaters. They had their superior Gods, twenty in

number and lesser divinities were almost innumerable. Jupiter thundered in the heavens, Neptune controlled the waves, and Pluto held dark dominion beneath. Every forest had its nymph. Every fountain its naiad. Every mountain and glen had its local divinity. Every breeze had its guiding God. Every passion which invades the heart and every employment of man had its patronizing deity. This was the state of things in those palmy ages when Rome was mighty and when Greece was classic. Rome, indeed, adopted the Gods of every nation she conquered, and even proposed to give Christ a place in her Pantheon.

Nor is the state of modern paganism in advance of this. If it might be said of Judea "according to the number of thy cities, &c., it may be said according to the number of thy population are thy Gods, oh Asia ! according to thy sands, Africa, according to thy waves, Polynesia.

In Semi-civilized China, the temples are filled with images. In Africa, every one carries his Gree-Gree. The ancient Magian doctrine that there are two Gods—one good, and the other evil, is still held among some nations, who worship the devil through fear, more than God through love.

The doctrine of divine unity is then exclusively a doctrine of revelation, and one which when embraced by the nations, will cause them to cast their idols to

the moles, and like vanquished followers of Baal, to exclaim the Lord he is God.

1. In adducing the proofs of the divine unity, it is almost superfluous to adduce the Scripture evidences. Their language is explicit, "The Lord our God is *one* God." "The Lord, he is God and there is none else." "Thou art God alone," Psalm lxxxvi, x.

Now some things are one in kind, but yet admit many individuals as angels and men, but God is *so one* that there are no other. Some things are one, because there are no other, and yet there might have been. But God is so one, there *can* be no more.

2. Two *Gods* are impossible. There may be two beings of *great* power; not of *almighty* power, *extensive* dominion, but not *universal* dominion. The question has been asked what would be the effect if an *irresistible* body should strike an *immovable* one.

We answer, the case supposed is an impossible one. For if there be an *irresistible* body, no *immovable* one could impede its course, otherwise it would be *resistable*. So it is impossible there be two Gods, for *one* has *all* power and perfection, and *none* is left for the *other*.

3. Multiplied Gods are *unnecessary*. The hypothesis of Theism accounts for every thing. Magianism supposes two are necessary to account for good and evil. But there is *more* good than evil, and evil is oftentimes

overruled for good. The one he has ordained, the other permitted. We are not obliged to furnish more than *adequate* cause for any thing. One God accounts for all things.

So in the earth and the heavens there is ever-growing evidence of a common Creator and Governor. No other God but the God of the Bible calls us His creatures or claims our love and service. We see but one *will*, one *intelligence*. One system of laws governs all things. In obedience to it an *apple falls and worlds sweep through space*. We have day and night. So do other planets. *Our* light is the same as *theirs*. We discover *new lands*, but the *old laws* are found there. The *elements* act, *electricity* operates, the *tides* rise, the *needle* vibrates, &c. One sun, one moon, one atmosphere. Each could they speak would trace their origin and acknowledge their allegiance to the same "*Lord of all*."

4. Finally, the idea of a plurality of Gods is incompatible with all true worship. True worship must be supreme, and undivided. If our affections are divided and each shares only a part, the God of the Bible would reject His as unworthy His acceptance. He will not set in the Pantheon and share the praises of His creatures, with rival Divinities. He claims to be "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," and He will not give His glory to another. If there be many Gods to

whom shall I pray? Whom shall I praise? Whom shall I love? Whom shall I serve? My mind roves distracted, and amid the mazes and mysteries of Polytheism, I sink into practical if not theoretical atheism.

Let not the doctrine of Divine unity be regarded as purely speculation. It is stated, and reiterated, and insisted on in the Scriptures for some good reason.

1. It is possible that though not a theoretical Polytheist you have yet many Gods, and though not an avowed Atheist, you are yet without God in the world. Gold, fame, pleasure, appetite may be your God, but in the God of the Bible you may have no saving interest.

2. If *this* God, be not your friend you have no other refuge to flee to. You *always must* be under his hand, always in his dominion—in heaven, earth or hell.

3. But if He be with you, you need fear no other, none shall pluck you out of His hand.

SERMON XI.

ETERNITY OF GOD.

Psalm lxi: 2.—“From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”

The next attribute of Deity which we shall notice is His eternity. By this we mean that God had no beginning, and will have no end. What was figuratively true of Melchisedec is literally true of God—that He is without beginning of days or end of life.

This great fact that pertains to the very nature of God, has given rise to a discussion which we do not think worth while to introduce here, except barely to state it and leave it to be opposed by the general tenor of Scripture. It has been said that past, present and future are not appropriate terms, as marking the Divine duration,—that with God is no past, no future, but that all is one *eternal now*,—that as He fills the universe with His presence, so He fills eternity with His duration. These representations may be sublime, but they are hardly intelligible, and, if they mean any thing else than that God is eternal in His duration, unscriptural. The Scriptures speak of God's being *before* other events, as before the mountains were brought forth, or earth formed. They represent His

being as a continued, unceasing *flow* of existence. He *was*, and *is*, and *is to come*.

This phrase, from everlasting to everlasting, is designed to mark the absolute eternity of God. There never was a time when God was not ; that is His past eternity. There never will come a time when He will not be ; that is His future eternity. In His future eternity angels and men will share His immortality, but they must be held in being by Him. In His past eternity He existed alone. These preliminaries being stated, we hasten to adduce the Scripture evidences of this doctrine.

1. In numerous Scriptures this attribute of Jehovah is pointed out by some expressive adjective prefixed to His name. Deut. xxxiii : 27 ; Rom. i : 20 ; Gen. xxi : 33 ; Isa. xl : 27 ; Rom. xvi : 26.

2. In other passages this doctrine is stated incidentally. This is the strongest proof. Isa. lvii : 15 ; Mal. iii : 6 ; I Tim. i : 17 ; James i : 17.

3. In other places this attribute is directly ascribed to God. Ex. iii : 14—"I AM hath sent me unto you." This denotes His self-existence. Ex. vi : 3—"I appeared unto Abraham by, &c. The name "Jehovah," was, with the Jews, an "*ineffable*" name. It denotes His *past* and *future eternity*. Deut. xxxii : 40—"I lift up My hand and swear, &c. Psal. cii : 11-12—"My days are as the shadow, &c. Psal. cii : 25-27—"Of

old hast Thou laid, &c. Here the fleeting nature of this earth is contrasted with the permanency of the Divine throne and the Divine being.

4. Aside from this Scriptural argument it will not be difficult to establish the eternity of God to all who admit his being.

(1.) In relation to His past eternity, if He has not existed from everlasting there was a time when there was no God. If there was no God, and now is, He must have created Himself, i. e., He must have *acted* before He *existed*.

(2.) His existence can never be terminated by any *external* agent; such have not power. Nor by Himself; because being perfectly *blessed* in Himself, He can never *desire* to cease to exist.

Our existence had a beginning and a cause, and *may have* an end; God had no beginning, no cause, and can never end.

II. Let us seek to impress this great truth upon our minds, and learn the practical lesson it imports. The ephemeral fly lives six hours. Brief, compared to our seventy years. This short, compared to Methusaleh's life. This only a fraction of our earth's history. This may be but a brief part of the years which angels and archangels have lived. But away in the dateless years of an eternity which had absolutely no beginning God dwelt supremely blest.

By and by, the sun will grow dim with age, the stars will wane and disappear, the earth shall be wrapt in its winding sheet of fire, and God and angels come to lay it in the grave ; but God remains the same and His years shall not fail. From everlasting to everlasting.

III. This view of the Divine eternity explains many dark ways of providence.

1. Infidelity has asked why did not God make man &c., *earlier*. Had He made them ten thousand ages earlier this cavil would have been just as forcible.

2. The same thing has been asked in reference to redemption. This cavil is made on the false supposition that Christ's death had no *retrospective* efficacy.

3. It has been said that amid the vast universe which claims the Divine notice, He has not the time to devote to this earth which the Scriptures represent. We answer, He has no lack of time. All eternity is at His disposal, "and a thousand years are with Him as one day."

4. Here is the foundation of security and joy to the people of God. Who would love and trust in objects in their very nature fleeting and dying? Wealth is transient, honors fade, friends die, the earth will perish, but the foundations of the Christian's joy and hope can never fail. And because He liveth, His

people shall live also. Engrafted upon the tree of life, they shall flourish in immortal youth.

5. The same fact carries no alleviation to the heart of one unreconciled to God. Oh ! if God were to cease to be, or were to cease to be God, then might I, amid the chaos which would ensue, or, at least, in the annihilation into which I must fall, find a refuge from the inexorable justice of the Almighty.

SERMON XII.

POWER OF GOD.

Psalms lxi : 11.—“God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this ; that power belongeth unto God.”

The great design of this Psalm is to show the author's confidence in God. Verses 1 and 2 strongly express this. Verses 11 and 12 show the ground of his confidence.

The peculiar phraseology of the text may be designed to point out the *two revelations* God has made, or to proclaim the two attributes of God—his power and his mercy. Taking the first exposition the text indicates the *double process* by which God proclaims his power.

Power is ability ; omnipotence is almighty power, and this is what we claim for God. To this broad statement two qualifications must be made.

1. *In morals* God can do nothing which is contrary to his moral nature. This is truth—hence, God cannot lie. He is pure—he cannot sin. This fact *heightens* his perfections.

2. *In nature* he cannot do what is not an object of power. No eye can see what is invisible. No ear hear what is inaudible. No power do what is impossible. True, the Scriptures affirm that “with God nothing is impossible.” But this is of course limited by the principle stated. For instance : He cannot cause a thing to be, and yet not to be. But this is no disparagement of his power, any more than it is of an eye that it cannot perceive nonentities. But with these limitations there is nothing which lies outside of the ability of God to do.

I. “*Once* hath God spoken,” viz : *In his word*, “that power belongeth, &c.” To that voice let us incline our ear. Gen. xvii : 1 ; Isa. xxvi : 4 ; James xxvii : 5 ; Dan. v. : 35 ; Acts xxvi : 8 ; 1 Cor. vi : 14 ; Rev. xix : 6. Of the evidence furnished in nature of this fact the Scriptures take notice. They ascribe creation to him. “The heavens declare the glory, &c.” “He spreadeth out the heavens.”

All this was done with utmost *ease*. He made

for the sea a *decreed* place. "Who hath measured the waters?"

These descriptions are often *terrible*. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. He divideth the sea by his power. He removeth mountains and they know it not; he overturneth them in his anger; he shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; he commandeth the sun and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars.

The Scriptures also represent spirits as equally subject to his power. The *good* veil their faces in his, &c. The *evil* he casts down to hell.

By and by he will blow out the sun, sweep his hand across the heavens and brush sun and stars aside, burn up this world, possibly building others of its materials, and will be ever and everywhere giving forth new evidences of his power.

II. The second voice heard by the Psalmist is that of nature itself. For a moment we too will listen to this voice, seconding the voice of Revelation.

There are points on the earth where the eye sweeps over vast extents of land and sea. But let this earth pass in panoramic swiftness before an observers eye, and death would come e'er his observations ceased. The *sun* would contain 1,300,000 such worlds. Some 500 worlds make up our system. To reach another system we must travel 20 billions of miles. A com-

mon ball would require four millions of years. Of these suns 1000 are visible to the eye. With these may be connected 50,000. But this is but the beginning. The telescope shows us that we are lingering as yet in the suburbs of the empire of the Most High. The milky way contains twenty millions. These are the centers of 1,000 million. Beyond this are many thousand nebulæ. Each of these is another milky way. I might state the number of worlds composing these nebulæ, but the mind would fail to comprehend them. *And all this is not the Universe. Outside this* other worlds may be. The Universe has bounds, but finite being will never reach them. None shall reach the frontier stars, or mount the wall that overlooks the vale of nonexistence. None can *ever* say I have seen *all* the works of God. And all these are *moving* with inconceivable velocity through space. The moon sweeps around the earth. The earth (68,000 miles per hour) around the sun. What we call *fixed stars* doubtless move with velocity far greater. What *power* is required to hold them in their mighty career.

It will heighten our conception to remember that they are the abodes of life. Other worlds are more than masses of matter,—the homes of intelligent beings. These spirits may dwell in purity.

1. Such views should humble us. “When I consider the heavens.”

2. They should excite humble trust. Great as are the works of God he takes care of them all. "He paints the insect's wing, &c." If the *telescope* humbles me, the *microscope* encourages me. He provides for the animacule, and I shall not be overlooked. "The God that rules on high." "Though the sea roar and the earth be moved."

We have spoken mainly of God's *physical* power. But there is a *moral* power equally deserving consideration.

Here, as before, there are limitations. God governs matter by force. "Doubtless the sailing of a cloud." He governs mind by motives. He makes man a partner in the work of redemption. It is no derogation to his moral power to say he cannot save a sinner in his sins, in impenitence and unbelief.

But to every true penitent there is ground of strong hope and confidence. He who can lift up the pillars of the universe can build up the ruined soul for heaven. He who can create worlds can re-create thy soul in righteousness.

Come hide thee under his wing. Make his truth thy shield and buckler. His power shall be thy defence. But if his mercy be rejected, that same power shall be exerted to bow thee down to ruin.

SERMON XIII.

OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

Psalm cxxxix: 7,—“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?”

The builders of the Egyptian pyramids must of necessity have been long employed in laying their broad and deep *foundations*. Vast labor must have been bestowed upon the lower strata which were to sustain the weight of the vast structures. So that after years of trial the laboring hosts saw only a plain covered with granite which rose but to an insignificant height above the surface. Yet the second layer had a less circumference,—and each one as it rose contracted still, and thus the enormous pile was lifted up, until its crowning apex stood far up in the heavens, the wonder and admiration of all coming time. So it must be with the builders of theological systems. Time must be taken with the foundation work. Each step must be examined with care so that when the system is complete, we may feel a sense of *security* as we commit our eternal interests to the truth of the views we have adopted. “God” says one “is never in a hurry,” and we in studying the Divine character should at least take time for a careful survey of His

attributes, and a study of our relations to Him, and the duties resulting thence. We being (to resume our figure) another stone for the foundation of our theological temple to place beside those already laid.

The doctrine which our text asserts in language the most sublime, and most lucidly illustrates, is the doctrine of Divine *omnipresence*. This doctrine needs not only to be established as a great fact of revelation, but to be separated from creed and erroneous opinions respecting it.

1. First, there is the pantheistic idea that God is every where, because every thing is a part of God. The idea of a personal God is repudiated, and God is said to be the aggregate of all things. Thus, "beast, bird, fish, insect," are elements of Deity. "He warms in the sun, refreshes, &c., &c." These are his *works*, the evidences of his power ; but they are not *himself*. If so, we (and not heathen) are idolaters.

2. A second error is that God is present every where only as a sovereign is present throughout his dominions. As Queen Victoria is said to be present by her authority, by her power, and by her representatives throughout that great empire on which the sun never sets,—or as *the Czar* makes himself to be known and feared from his capital to the wilds of Siberia ; so on this view, God is only present every

where, because every where his authority and sovereignty extend. But this does not approach the Scriptural view, which is that God is really every where, as truly as he is any where,—that in Him we live and move and have our being—that He filleth all things.

3. Another erroneous or at least defective view, is that although God is really everywhere, yet He is not present to the same extent, or as fully in some places as in others, on earth for instance as in heaven.

This view may seem authorized by some passages of Scripture. The idea doubtless is that heaven is the place in which He reveals himself, manifests His glory, and becomes an object of adoring contemplation to all the “pure in heart.” Heaven even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, the earth is filled with His glory, and the universe is His boundless home.

This then reveals the sublime, and as to its mode, the incomprehensible doctrine of the divine omnipresence. That God is present in some parts of the material universe, and in some portions of space, will be admitted by all who believe in his being.

As no being can act where he is not, and as we can see the traces of his workmanship in all places within our view, we conclude that God is at least in *many places* at the same time. I look in one direction and I see a cluster of fruit trees. The sap passes up their trunks, permeates every branch, and nourishes the

foliage and the blossoms, and brings to perfection the luscious fruits of autumn. I turn my eyes in another direction and I see flocks and herds grazing on the plain, insects buzzing in the air, and birds singing among the branches. Every one of them is a monument of creative skill, and each lives and moves and has its being in God. I look upward and the sun as it sheds its waves of light over a hundred worlds seems to say "God is here and my light is but the shadow of Deity." The stars look down from their blue and beautiful homes in the heavens and exclaim, "God is here, He holds us in his home." The winds which are His steeds, and the clouds which are His chariot, utter deep their voice, "God is here," and at His bidding they navigate the heavens and send down showers upon earth's thirsty fields." The heavens which are His throne, and the earth which is His footstool, are covered thick over with characters written by the hand of an ever present Divinity. The thunder is the utterance of His will, and the lightning the glancing of His eye. The rainbow which spreads its bright arch across the heavens, the mystic fires which stream up the northern sky, the sleepless ocean, and the teeming earth, all show forth not only a creating, but a conservative hand, not a remote and unconcerned, but a present, all-pervading Deity.

Nor will this obvious truth be done away by resolv-

ing all these evidences of the Divine presence into the results of the laws of nature. Laws are not efficient. They refer us to an agent. They presuppose a law-maker, and executor.

Now if it be thus evident that God is actually present in all places open to our inspection, is it not clear that he is equally present in all other places had we access to them. If evidences of the Divine presence flash upon us from every point which eye or thought can reach, what folly to imagine that the regions which lie beyond our view are also outside Jehovah's dominions, that the limit of our knowledge is also the limit of the power and presence of God. "If this be marvelous in your eyes, should it also be in mine?"

II. Of this attribute of Deity, the Scriptures speak in their usual style of elevation and sublimity, 1 K. viii : xxvii.

When we remember that this is no philosophical abstraction, but a great truth which the Bible announces and nature confirms, into what solemn relations does it introduce the human race, and what mighty motives does it urge to induce obedience and holiness.

Said one, if I were sure that *spirits* were about me, it would exert a restraining influence. But ye are spectacles not only to angels and to men, but are moving under the notice of the Omnipotent's eye. Breathe

softly child of eternity ; for your every whispered word, unwhispered thought, are uttered and formed in the presence of Him who is to be your final judge.

Tread carefully heir of eternal retribution ; for God seeth the way you take and the echoes of your footsteps are audible in His ear.

Be circumspect in all the movements of thy hand and heart, for God is around you like the vital air, and thou art standing in the midst of Deity. No distance is between you and God. Do you ever say, no eye is near to see ? Darkness, or utter seclusion, shuts out all observation ? Yet, still thy heart should say with Hagar, " Thou God seest me."

Oh ! *do no act*, you would not, could you see an incarnate God standing by your side. *Utter no word* you would not speak were the world a great whispering gallery, where each whisper multiplies itself into a thousand emphatic voices, centering in the ear of your judge and prolonged through eternity.

Cherish no thought unfit to be graven on a record to endure forever.

Finally, how consoling to every sincere disciple the thought of a God thus constantly near at hand. You have not to go to heaven to bring, &c. " Where is your God ?" said an infidel to a child. " How large

is he?" said another. Though now we *see him not*, yet believing in him earnestly, and loving him perfectly, ye may rejoice with joy unspeakable.

SERMON XIV.

WISDOM OF GOD.

Psalm cxlvii: 5.—His understanding is infinite.

The *infinitude* of understanding here ascribed to the Most High is another of the Divine attributes proclaimed alike by nature and revealed religion. The name usually given to this attribute is *omniscience*, by which we mean that God possesses knowledge absolutely perfect. "Past, present, future to his sight, &c."

1. He knows all that ever has been. He can with profound glance look backward to the moment when the first speck of matter rose into being at His word, and when, at His bidding, the first spirit sprung into life. He knows the history of every world, the physical changes it has undergone, the laws by which it is governed and the destiny which awaits it. He knows the fortunes which have come to every spirit, the character they have formed, the good and evil they have done.

2. He knows all the present. His eye sees all that transpires in his mighty empire. Every sun that shines, every world that revolves, every spirit that sings in heaven, or groans in hell, every bird that flies in the air and fish that passeth through the sea, every lilly that blooms, and every mote that falls or rises,—they are all under the notice of His eye and known to His all-grasping mind.

With the world of thought He is equally conversant. He sees it start from its birth-place in the soul, and His eye darts through all its sinnous course. He sees the conception, the resolution and the will in all its haltings and advances until it ripens into action. These have a *moral character* which He understands. A purpose seen by God is murder. An amorous glance is adultery. A covetous desire is theft. The heart is a region which He fully understands, and to it He is wont to trace every act and word.

3. The future is open to His eye. He throws His penetrating glance upon *futurity* as well as *antiquity*. He traces every particle of matter through all its changes and combinations to the moment when it shall cease to be if any such moment shall ever come, and every spirit, their good and evil, their doings, and omissions, and, in short, their whole coming history. All prophecy is evidence of this. He who could call Cyrus by name a century before his birth,

who in the infancy of the Jewish race could describe their history as it is this day? who could predict of Nineveh and Babylon a doom which is verified by the remains of ancient grandeur which would come to light after centuries have gone by, must be entirely familiar not only with the physical and civil history of the future but also with the moral history and everlasting condition of man.

And here the question arises if God knows all this has He not determined it? So far as matter is concerned "yes," so far as mind is concerned "no." He has *bound* nature fast in fate, but left free the will. Moral events happen not because God knows them; but He knows them because they will happen. They arise not from Divine knowledge but from human freedom. Knowledge is not *influence*, it is not *causative*. It has no effect on events past or future. Unforeknown, they would be just as certain.

A modified form of knowledge is *wisdom*, which is knowledge under the control of goodness, or knowledge directed to benevolent ends. "Knowledge is power," not only to do good but evil; and knowledge controlled by malevolence is characteristic of evil spirits, directed by infinite goodness its product is the happiness of its object. This is Divine wisdom, of which man, and nature, and the Bible, furnish *innumerable illustrations*.

I shall not weary you with elaborate views or lengthy statements of the evidences furnished by nature of the wisdom of God. Look ever so superficially at the heavens and the earth and man, and you will be constrained to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Oh Lord how wonderful are thy works, *in wisdom* hast thou made them all." Look at man! his eye designed to scour the horizon is located at the point most elevated, and easily rolls in its socket. The ear so constructed as to catch each audible sound, The mouth with its delicate taste to determine the aliments, the teeth to masticate, and the *gastric juice* to *digest them*.

Then *outwardly* the light is prepared for the eye, sound for the ear, food for the taste. So our *moral* and *social* nature find their external correspondences.

1. Wisdom is evinced when an important and worthy *end* is apparent. The *end* of the creation was to show forth the Divine perfections and to bestow on man the largest happiness.

2. When its effects are produced by a few elements. Here we have few *elements*, and few *laws*. These produce all we see of magnitude, beauty and variety. Divine wisdom conceived all that Divine power has executed. At His bidding the clouds charged with showers navigate the heavens and call forth beauty

and impart fertility to a hundred fields. Under the beneficent outworkings of Divine wisdom nature rejoices, the valleys laugh and sing, and all the trees clap their hands.

With these views the Scriptures entirely agree. Inspired with lofty conceptions of His knowledge, one cries, "Oh, Lord! thou hast searched me; thou knowest my down sitting," &c., Psalms cxlix : 1, 4.

The wise man surveys nature and cries out, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded." Prov. iii : 19, 20.

The apostle taking a combined view of nature and grace, of knowledge and wisdom, cries out, "Oh the depth of the riches both," &c.

INFERENCES.

1. It is this attribute of God which eminently qualifies Him for the position of natural governor of the universe. Under the government of one less wise, fearful derangements would take place. No regularity would attend the seasons, or the return of day and night. The heavenly bodies uncontrolled by wisdom would run at random through heaven, and we should soon "see worlds unbalanced from," &c. *Now* no accident can happen. Nothing is left to blind chance, but everything controlled by wisdom. Every volcano and earthquake have their use. Every particle of rain, and every flake of snow is sent to its destined place by a wisdom which cannot err.

2. This attribute of God is the foundation of the

comforting doctrine of Divine providence. There are dark scenes in every man's life where no light shines save from on high. But I look heavenward and *there* is light ; God is still at the helm, and the ship though laboring and groaning, shall yet sweep into port. Am I in need ? My heavenly Father knoweth. Am I sick ? His hand is on me. We see but a little part of the great plans of providence, and with our limited views it becomes us to spare our censures and wait for more perfect developments, when the wisdom of the whole will be fully unfolded.

3. Finally we see how perfectly competent is Almighty God to act as our final judge. Human judgments are often erroneous on account of the ignorance of witnesses, counsel, or judge. But the entire history of every man's life is known to God.

(1.) Are you a true christian ? Man may traduce you, but "the Lord knoweth."

(2.) Are you tempted ? "The Lord knoweth how to," &c.

(3.) Are you deceived ? God is not.

(4.) Are you a hypocrite ? Your heart is open and naked in His sight. You have deceived others, God never ; and now in the grave your mask is left.

(5.) Are you unconverted ? God knows all your sins with all their aggravations. Make the Judge your friend.

S E R M O N X V .

IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

Mal. iii : 6.—“I am the Lord, I change not.”

We have spoken thus far of those attributes of God which are denominated His natural attributes, because they are either directly taught or strongly confirmed by the teachings of nature. One of these remains to be spoken of, and one which crowns and perpetuates the whole, and that is His *Immutability*. We have said God is omnipresent, &c., but what guarantee have we that this will be always the case? Change characterizes everything human. We, our works, and the earth are undergoing constant changes. Amid this vascillating scene, how charming this announcement. When we say God is immutable, we mean that He is subject to no change in the mode of His being, none in his *attributes*, his desires, his determinations, &c.

I. But several remarks are important.

1. His very *unchanging principles* require frequent changes both in his views of, and conduct toward, the work of his hands. When God created the world, he created it for a specific purpose, and when the end is

attained it is entirely compatible with stability of purpose to destroy it. When man is holy and walks in ways well pleasing to God, God regards him complacently and approvingly. Turning from his righteousness, he forfeits the Divine favor. Is God therefore vascillating? Nay, His very immutability requires Him to have those different views of man in his different moral states. His regards are for principles, not men ; for character, not individuals. He is thus acquitted of impartiality, and this is the ground of His earnest pleadings with Israel, by the prophet Ezekiel. They charged Him with inequality or mutability in His ways. But God exclaims, "When a righteous man turns away," &c.

2. Here, also, is the true explanation of those Scriptures in which God is said to repent, &c. It repented God that He had made man. He repented of His purpose to destroy Nineveh.

3. Hence, also, the non-fulfilment, in certain instances, of the Divine promises. To Eli He said, "I said, indeed, that thy house," &c To David He promised a permanent throne. But promises are conditional.

4. God's immutability must be distinguished from obstinacy, from inexorable adherence to a purpose which penitence and prayers cannot change. This is an element of His immutability,—He is immutable

in His purpose to hear prayer, and to be influenced by it, to forgive the penitent, save the believer, and damn the unbeliever. He is immutably exorable, and immutably and infinitely disposed to take into his favor every rebel against his government, who will come to him.

II. The evidences of the Divine immutability, like his other attributes, is partly derived from His word, and partly from His works.

1. The Scriptures place the permanency of God in contrast with the variable and passing things of earth. *Psa. cii : 25 ; James i ; 17 ; Rom. xi : 29.*

2. This truth may be argued from the general stability of the order of nature. The sun that knoweth the time of his rising, the stars which move in their appointed paths, the regular flow of the tides, the annual springing of the flowers, the permanency of the mountains and the stability of the earth, speak of an immutable creator and governor. The same mutual laws run on from age to age, showing that God is free from all caprice. He is *the Lord*, therefore he changes not. The *Father of lights*, therefore with him no variableness. There have been deviations from these laws—in the case of miracles—but these only prove God's power, as a general uniformity in nature's laws establishes the uniformity of nature's God. This uniformity of nature is the foundation of our confidence

and the source of our security. Scoffers appeal to it as an argument against Christ's coming. "Where is the promise of his coming?" But this only proves,

(1.) That God is long suffering.

(2.) That He acts on an *extended plan*.

3. The Divine immutability may be argued from the uniformity of His moral laws. The unchanging laws of the Medes and Persians but faintly adumbrate the perpetuity of the Divine law. True, the patriarchal, prophetic and evangelical dispensations had diverse institutions; but all were developments of the law requiring supreme love. "Upon these two hang all," &c.. This law is perfect and can never change. It comes to an angel, man, child. If the capacity be a drop, it demands it and accepts it; if it be an ocean, it demands it all, down to its profoundest depth, and out to its furthest shore.

III. The argument for the Divine immutability may be applied to each one of the Jehovah's attributes.

1. He is immutable in intelligence. If he could experience any change here, it must be either by way of *increase* or *decrease*, by *acquisition* or by *loss*. Either supposition is fatal to His claim as a perfect God. One pre-supposes *previous* ignorance; the other possible *future* ignorance.

2. By the same reasoning it is plain that God is immutable in holiness. If holiness is essential to His

nature it cannot be increased nor diminished. If it be in the ascending or descending scale, it is rising from or verging toward positive impurity.

3. God is immutable in power. He has no greater power now, even with His enlarged empire, than He had prior to the birth of the first world or first angel. And when suns go out and systems perish, his power will undergo no abatement. "They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure."

IV. The practical uses of this doctrine are such as these---

1. To inspire confidence in Him as our natural protector and provider. Were we living under the government of a capricious being, a sense of insecurity, and actual anarchy, would pervade the universe. But we may dismiss all these gloomy apprehensions when we remember that the reins of universal government are held not only by the strong but *steady* hand of Almighty God. Under his direction nature will pursue her uniform career. "Seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter will continue."

2. From this subject we may determine the light in which God regards us. Aside from this we could never know what was pleasing to God. The courtiers of a capricious monarch will be caressed to-day and beheaded to-morrow, and know no cause. But

the love of God is not a fondness awakened by no reason and subsiding for no cause ; He has no favoritisms to indulge ; but He unchangably loves holiness and unchangably hates sin. And holiness and sin are the same in every age, and their manifestations awaken the same emotions in the heart of Deity now as they did when angels fell or man transgressed.

(1.) Here true penitence and obedience find their highest encouragements. The Lord is of as great mercy *now* as in ancient days. He is near to all that call ; His heart has not grown insensible, His ear is not heavy, His hand is still stretched out. To *you* belong the promises. You may hide yourself under the sameshield which protected the saints in ancient days.

(2.) Impenitence and disobedience may well tremble under these views of the Divine immutability. We know how God has dealt with sinners in other years. Swift judgment has often traveled in the wake of transgression. Korah, Sodom, the flood, &c. You have the same occasion to tremble as sinners of old.

(3.) When we have emigrated to our final home in the eternal world, and have entered upon our final destinies, still will be heard the declaration, "I am the Lord, I change not." None will lift the condemnation from the sinner's soul, and forever shall the happiness of the holy be secured. "When we've been there ten thousand years."

SERMON XVI.

VERACITY OF GOD.

Num. xxiii 19.—God is not man that he should lie.

Few characters have given more perplexity to readers of the Bible than that of Balaam the prophet of Midian. Our subject will not allow us to speak lengthily on this subject, but we will indulge in a few remarks. The whole history evinces that Balaam was at first a true prophet of God, but blinded by the glare of Balak's gold he sought to curse God's people. This inclination he was not permitted to indulge, but in spite of himself he uttered lofty predictions of the rising prosperity of Israel. He then induced the Israelites to sin and thus secured their overthrow. I shall quote several passages of Scripture illustrating this view of his character: 2 Peter ii: 15; Jude xi; Rev. ii: 14; Dent. xxiii: 3-6; Josh. xxiv: 9-10. But while these Scriptures confirm our view of Balaam's character, they do not affect the truth or importance of his predictions. Through him God attests His truthfulness. "God is not man that he should repent."

1. In establishing the truth of God we observe that God can have no motive to be otherwise than truth-

ful. Men use duplicity to accomplish ends which they have not power to accomplish by direct means. But God need use no prevarication for all power and wisdom are His.

2. God is *good* and therefore *true*. The ends sought to be accomplished by deceit among men are malevolent ends. Men deceive that they may defraud, but infinite Benevolence delights only in good and needs no such means, for it aims to accomplish no such ends.

3. God is immutable—therefore true. Falsehood changes its position, makes contradictory and variant statements—affirms and denies. Immutably *false* is the same in effect as immutably *true*, for he who always speaks falsehood if understood conversely will always convey truth. He who is immutable cannot be sometimes true and sometimes false but always true or always false.

4. God must be true because he demands our love our respect and our worship. Now He has so constituted us that we despise falsehood, we rank it among the lowest and meanest vices, and banish the liar from our society. If God were not true He has so constituted us that we must despise Him; and yet he claims our highest regards and love. He must then be *true*; or at least this must be the lovely character in which He reveals himself to His creatures.

5. His truth is evinced by all that overpowering

evidence which demonstrates the truth of the Bible. This is *His* word and whatever affirms it affirms His general veracity.

On some other occasion this evidence may be adduced, it cannot here be even glanced at. But the Bible has an external authentication. History and tradition, and all science, and fulfilled prophecies, are witnesses of the truth of God. His promises which have never been broken, His faithfulness which has never failed, His threatenings which have always been executed, His predictions which time in its mighty sweep has been accomplishing, all prove him true. The antiquarian digs up the foundations of buried cities, the traveler ranges over the scenes of Scripture story, climbs the steeps of Hebrew mountains, and everywhere finds attestations of the truth of God.

5. Truth is a most amiable virtue. Falsehood a most odious vice; and the higher the position of the individual the more despicable is this vice. If we despise a peasant who has no regard for his word, much more do we despise a prince who is faithless to his engagements; and what must be the view which the universe must have of God if he be found untrue.

Nay, the liar is not only despised by others, but he despises himself. He has not even self respect; and if God be destitute of this element he can behold

himself with no complacency. He forfeits the regards of his creatures and himself.

7. If the Bible be admitted as evidence—it speaks out in lofty and strong assertion on this point. It declares that “it is impossible for God to lie,” that “he is abundant in goodness and truth,” that “his truth reacheth unto the clouds,” that “he is plenteous in mercy and truth,” that “his truth endureth to all generations” that “he keepeth truth forever,” that “he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself,” that “he is faithful that promised” that “his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” Such are but specimens of the testimony of the Scripture on the veracity of God, and the Scriptures themselves are an enduring monument of his truth.

II. And now that that great doctrine of religion stands affirmed both by reason and revelation, we have still before us the startling fact that some of the children of men not only distrust but positively disbelieve God, but some are found who fear God will lie and others who hope he will.

1. Some are afraid God will lie.

(1.) The penitent who is seeking pardon. He hears God say “the broken and contrite heart he will not despise,” that “every one that seeketh findeth,” that “ye shall find me when ye search for me with all your

hearts," and yet he fears that God will lie, and lingers unblest around the mercy seat.

(2.) The Christian in tribulation. He reads "when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." "In six troubles I will be with you, and in the seventh not leave you," and yet he relies timorously on the divine promises, and hesitates to appropriate the offered deliverance.

(3.) The church is passing through the wilderness of trial and affliction. The waves of worldliness roll even to the threshold of the sanctuary, and wickedness triumphs in all our streets. Oh ! how apt to distrust God, and hang badges of mourning on the ramparts of Zion, instead of joyfully committing every interest to Him whose faithfulness cannot fail, and crying out with Luther, come let us sing the 46th psalm, "God is our refuge."

(4.) There is a saint about to die. The wheels of life are moving slow. Shadows from Eternity fall around the dying bed. Jordan rolls close by its heaving flood. Oh ! how often, instead of at once throwing himself upon the immutable promise of Divine support and joyfully trusting God to fulfill his promise of being with him, does the dying christian exclaim "all thy waves and thy billows go over me, I shall never enter the goodly land."

But God is not man that He should lie. Hath He

spoken and shall He not do it? Hath He said it and shall He not make it good?" "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his word."

2. And while there are some who fear God will lie, there are still others who *hope* He will. Although if He be found untrue, the ultimate hope of the world fails, and all foundations of confidence give way, yet they would have God prove a liar.

(1.) God has said that "the wicked shall be turned into hell;" but all the wicked hope He will lie and take them up to heaven.

(2.) He has said wo to the wicked it shall be *ill* with him, but sinners hope it will be *well* with them.

(3.) He has said that He will not hold the swearer guiltless, that liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth, that He will by no means clear the guilty. But they hope He will clear them.

These are no *false alarms* sounding through the word of God. He utters no unmeaning promise or threat.

INFERENCES.

1. We can see the philosophy of that great peculiarity of religion which gives to faith so great importance and so striking a prominence. You may have supposed that this was a mere arbitrary law, that an undue importance was attached to it by God. But

what is faith ? It is believing God, taking Him at His word. Now he that disbelieves God makes Him a liar, you charge upon the God of truth a crime fitting only to him who is a liar and the father of it.

2. We see in a striking light the exceeding wickedness of falsehood in man. Satan is the father of lies. Man bears his image as far as he indulges this odious vice. No crime has ever called down quicker vengeance than this on men ; instance Achan, Gehazi, Ananias and Sapphira ; and no class of sinners are more severely threatened. What a thunberbolt from heaven against the liar, is the text already quoted, " all liars, &c." Cultivate an inviolable habit of truth. Hold it fast and never let it go. It will be to you an ornament of grace and a chain of gold about thy neck.

3. This attribute of the Most High, leaves sinners in a condition of most fearful danger. Even if natural religion were our only guide, there would be ground of fearful apprehension. But the Scriptures come with their clearer light and declare that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And now the sinner's only hope is that God may after all have secret reasons, and that what He has uttered may have another, rather than its obvious meaning, or as a last resort He hopes that He will re-

tract His threatenings, and save the world. But this view of the Divine veracity crushes his hopes and lands him out in the sea of despair.

4. No, not in despair if he will repent and turn to God, for then the same Divine veracity which confronts the sinner with terrors, will be the source of his security and his hope, and the pledge of his salvation. The pillars of His throne would sooner fall than His promise to such as truly repent and unfeignedly believe the Gospel.

5. Here, too, is the foundation of all the hopes of the righteous. "If the foundations are removed what can the righteous do?" but the word of the Lord standeth sure, all His promises are faithfulness and truth, and he that trusteth in Him shall be as Mt. Zion which cannot be removed.

Here then are exhaustless resources, made available for the child of grace. It flows in copious and un-failing streams from that exhaustless fountain, the mercy and the truth of God.

SERMON XVII.

MYSTERY AND JUSTICE OF GOD.

Psalm xiv : ii.—Clouds and darkness are around about Him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne."

A prince once asked a philosopher to give him a definition of the term God. A day for reflection was asked, then two days, then four, because the question rose in vastness before the inquirer's mind, and ever seemed more difficult and mysterious as he advanced. So has it seemed to us in the course of our inquiries into the character and attributes of the great God we worship. But we settle down at last into the conclusion of the Psalmist, that though mystery clings to the Divine character, he is righteous and just. This Psalm opens with the affirmation that "*the Lord* reigneth, (not Fate or Chance,) and by calling upon the *Earth* to rejoice and upon the *Isles* to be glad. Our hearts will join in this chorus of praise when we rightly understand the nature of Jehovah's reign.

I. But let us at the outset acknowledge our inability fully to comprehend the great Jehovah. No *created* being can ever do this. St. Chrysostom and the boy emptying the ocean. This unfolds the reasons of this inability, viz : our *contracted powers* and *His in-*

finitly. As matter of fact we know this to be so, and it is what might have been inferred *in advance*.

1. Such ability would lower our estimate of His greatness. That is not complicated machinery which a child can understand; nor a stupendous world which I can scan. A mountain which loses itself in the clouds, an ocean which rolls through every zone, excites emotions of sublimity and awe. And this must be the effect on the minds of all who contemplate that great Being whose pavilion is darkness.

2. Such knowledge of God as shuts out all obscurity would preclude the possibility of walking by faith. The father does not disclose all his *reasons* to his son, he chastens him, gives nauseating medicines, cuts off the gangrened limb, and probes the shrinking wound, and bids him trust the result to his superior wisdom. So God takes our health, our wealth, our friends, away. Some of His reasons may be apparent; for the development of others we must wait for eternity. "Where we cant unriddle, learn to trust." But the mysteriousness of God's ways will be in some degree abated if we remember that,

(1.) Everything is not to be attributed to God. Such are *wars*, which come from your lusts—and, indeed, all sins.

(2.) Then physical evils are the result of moral, and God is their dispenser in judgment or for human dis-

cipline. Sin is only permitted not enjoined ; and without this permission there could be no probation for man. These evils he oftentimes overrules for good." All things."

II. When now we have admitted that God's ways are incomprehensible, if we have not demonstrated His *justice*, we have at least shown that He can never be pronounced unjust. My verdict cannot be adverse to the Divine rectitude after I have admitted my inability to comprehend Him. But we are enabled to do more than show that no man can prove God unjust. He can be shown to be just and right, both in His character and in His acts.

1. From His other attributes,

(1.) He is independent, and can be under no necessity of resorting to injustice for the attaining of His ends.

(2.) He is benevolent, and, under the promptings of benevolence, is ever giving and doing more than inexorable justice demands, and it is not to be presumed or imagined that He will do less. Benevolence and injustice cannot inhere in the same character.

2. The justice of God is evident from the fact that in none of His recorded or known acts has he been guilty of injustice. The nearest approach to this is seen in the affliction of good men. But such men are always ready to exonerate God from the charge

of injustice, and declare that He has punished them less than they deserve. Nor can any individual affirm this until the whole scheme of the Divine administration shall be unfolded, which, it is evident, can only be done in eternity. "What thou knowest not now." Eternity will settle the misadjudgments of time, rectify its wrongs and harmonize its discords.

3. We know enough of the reign of Jehovah to know that he discriminates between good and evil, and even here the *beginnings* of a perfect administration are apparent. He deals with *nations* in this life, because they will not exist in a national capacity in any other life. And has not virtue always been followed by national prosperity, and has not vice always paved the way for the overthrow of nations? Individual offenders, too, have oftentimes been selected as subjects of an earlier retribution, and held up as terrible examples to others. But eternity alone will complete that reign of justice, of which we see only the beginnings. And now, who are they who exclaim against Divine Justice? Plainly, those whom that justice condemns, upon whom it has claims.

Who finds fault with the laws of the land? Those who violate them. The criminal exclaims against penalties to which he is exposed. The forger writes his name in *a moment*, and suffers in prison *long years*, as the result.

Who finds fault with the laws of his physical nature, and with the natural laws of God? The maniac.

Who with God's moral law, with its requirements and penalties? To the sinner, His way is hard. To the righteous the law of the Lord 'is perfect—"holy, just and good." Then, there are times when the Christian will need to call into exercise all his faith, and summon all his fortitude, to acquiesce in the ways of the Lord. Sickness and death invade his dwelling, but he knows that great moral ends are answered by the discipline God has adopted. However continued felicity might do for other beings, it would not do for us. Remove all these afflictions from man, restore antediluvian longevity, and the world would soon need to be purified by a second flood. But while the justice and goodness of God are apparent in the general arrangements of providence, there are some dispensations where our sagacity is at fault; there are clouds which our dim eyesight cannot pierce; there are mysteries which, in our infantile years, we cannot explain.

I see a *Rachel* weeping over her children. *Jacob* exclaiming, "Joseph is not." *David* mourning for Absalom. The *minister* falls amid his years and his usefulness. The *missionary* who was just planting his banner on heathen shores. Oh! earth is dark, but look up—God reigneth still. What though thou

rulest not? *Unbelief* cries out, "clouds and darkness." *Faith* chimes in, "righteousness and judgment." *Unbelief* says, my grief is great. *Faith* replies, 'tis my Father's hand. *Unbelief* exclaims, earth is a dark and cheerless abode at best. *Faith* responds, yonder are serene and tranquil heavens. *Unbelief* affirms that earth is all deranged, and blind, imperious fate is making havoc in an orphan world. *Faith* exultingly sings, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." And this voice of submission and adoration that sounds along the shores of time, and rolls down from generation to generation, shall gather into richer cadences and break forth into more rapturous songs when it meets the anthems of the celestial harpers, and together they shall shout, "Alleluia!"

Thus, with as much brevity as the lofty nature of the subject would admit, we have contemplated the character of the "high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity." It is true, we have but planted our feet upon the threshold of this great subject, but here we must pause, and wait until we are permitted to enter that glorious world where God will more fully and clearly reveal Himself to the nations of the saved, and where the smile of the Lord shall be the satisfying feast of the soul.

But eternity itself will never fully lift the veil from character of the Deity, so that any created being can

say, "I have found out the Almighty to perfection." Radiant clouds will still form themselves in glorious wreaths around His throne,—He will forever dwell in light unapproachable. And when the spirit nearest the throne shall have completed his profoundest and most protracted inquiries, he will still be in the position of Newton lingering on the shores of an ocean which no reed can measure and no plummet sound. He will still be a God that hideth Himself, still clouds and darkness will be round about Him, but on the crest of every cloud, and standing out from the thick darkness, in lines of light, shall be read, "God is love;" and voices from the uncounted armies of the skies shall shout in blessed response to the acclamations of earth's redeemed, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven of thy help and in His excellency on the sky." The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Happy art thou, Oh ! Israel,—who is like unto thee, Oh ! people, saved of the Lord.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be His glorious name, forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen."

SERMON XVIII.

GOODNESS OF GOD.

Psalms xxxiv: 8.—“Oh taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Were we to dismiss our inquiries into the attributes of the Most High at this point, we should be overwhelmed, it may be with the loftiness and sublimity of His character, but should still be without those views best calculated to inspire love, awaken gratitude, and beget confidence. A bare belief in God is insufficient to allay human anxieties, and inspire joyful confidence in men. The consideration of God's natural abilities is rather speculative than otherwise: the inquiry “*is God good?*” is one that comes home to every man's business and bosom. If God has moral character at all it is of course good or evil; he is benevolent or malevolent. Independent of those more obvious proofs on which the Divine benevolence rests, the following remarks have an important bearing on the subject.

1. God can have no motive to be malevolent. That malevolence is in itself more desirable than benevolence, cannot be asserted or believed. Nor can God desire to be malevolent for the purpose of crushing any mighty rival who should rise up against him;

nor yet for the purpose of grasping any good which only injustice could extort from others.

2. He has every possible motive to be benevolent.

(1.) From what we know it is evident that goodness and happiness are closely allied, and that malevolence always accompanies misery. And as happiness is an object of universal desire, God's motives for goodness are as strong as his desire for happiness.

(2.) If God requires the love and attachment of his creatures it is necessary that he be benevolent in his character. Even a Nero desired to be loved, but failed to learn that love only can beget love. If he be malevolent he must disguise this fact from his creatures, or rest satisfied with their hatred.

3. Our condition in this world is incompatible with the idea that God is malevolent. Here we are at a loss for a point to commence our views.

(1.) The position of our earth with respect to the sun is a strong proof of Divine beneficence.

(2.) The *two* motions of the earth.

(3.) The productions of the earth adapted to our physical wants.

(4.) The eye adapted to the light.

(5.) The ear to nature's harmony.

(6.) Our social nature to Society.

(7.) The heavens and the earth are covered with evidences of Divine benignity. These blessings are

either constant or are continually recurring. They are matters of course. In every age and in every land these benefits are diffused. God leaves not himself without witness, but does good giving rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons filling us with food and gladness. A consideration of mercies like these will awaken in us the earnest wish of the Psalmist, that men would praise the Lord, &c.

4. That there are evils in the world is here admitted, and will hereafter be more particularly attended to, but I find another evidence of Divine goodness in the *alleviations* which misery here finds, and the *remedies* which are furnished. There are diseases—there are medicines. There is cold—there is fire. There is heat—and cooling shade. *Pain* itself is a merciful provision, without which more serious injuries would happen. So is *fear* which throws out its defences and puts us on our guard.

5. The original and main design of every thing is benevolent. That there are evils we have admitted, but these seem to be incidental, and were no part of the original plan. Nature is in a state of confusion. Revelation tells us how it became so, and it is but fair to let in the light of revelation to explain the dark enigmas and clear up the mysteries which surround us. A traveler passing over the ruins of Palmyra or Ephesus might say there are here no traces of grand-

eur or greatness, all is a heap of rubbish and confusion. It would be replied, "You see the city only in its ruins, and yet amid its very ruins are evidences of its ancient greatness." Yon waste where roaming lions heave its colored dust, its broken architraves, its fallen columns, attest its primitive glory. So earth and man are in ruins. Earth's sterility, its briars and thorns, have come in the wake of transgression. Does man bow down in toil? Must he fructify his fields with the sweat of his brow? This is a result of sin.

But still the main design is apparent, and that design is beneficent. Were it otherwise it is evident that ease would have been only the casual and occasional state of man, while pain would have been his usual or continual allotment. Every sight would have been *horrid*. Every sound a discord. Fœtid air would have filled our lungs, and perpetual storms howled along our sky. Our food would have been bitter and rancid, and every touch would have been the sting of a scorpion. Every nerve would have been a telegraphic wire along which lightning pains would shoot, and social converse would be mutual howlings of rage and pain. The anatomist in dissecting the human body, instead of finding the evidences of beneficent design in every part of the body, would see the existence of members formed on purpose to irritate, to inflame, to obstruct the passage of

the food or the flow of blood ; he would find glands which were designed to originate disease, &c., fountains whence veins as naturally and freely rose as springs from the mountain side. But he finds none of these. Pain is caused by the interruption of natural healthful life. Disease and death are grafted upon scions of native excellency and of original immortality.

I have not yet mentioned the Bible, nor will I now undertake to recite the numerous texts which affirm the goodness of God. But,

1. Its very *intent* is beneficent. Why else its informations, its accumulation of prophecies, and precept, and promises, and prayers. The Bible brings blessings wherever it comes. It is the harbinger of civil liberty, of benevolent institutions, of social amenities and domestic joys. Blessings spring in its train like flowers in the steps of fabled fairies. And this book, so full of benevolent interests, is the book of God.

2. Descending to a little closer view I find in this volume exceeding great and precious promises. They are addressed to the youthful and the aged, to the orphan and the widow, to the penitent and bereaved, to the sick and the dying. Benevolence certainly inspired and uttered them, as benevolence fulfills them from age to age.

3. There are also threatenings in the word of God. They are designed to hold man back from ruin. They are obstacles thrown in the sinless path to hell, bulwarks built up around the pit. God threatens that he might not strike, and strikes that he may not destroy.

4. The Scriptures prove the benevolence of God by their positive assertions. "Thou art good and doest good." "The Lord is good to all." "Oh give thanks unto the Lord."

5. By the works ascribed to Him Creation affirms it. Providence reiterates it. Redemption crowns it. Here Divine love finds its brightest manifestation. "God is love." Calvary and the cross is where Divine beneficence conveys, and from which it radiates over the world. And this benevolence of God takes higher rank when it is remembered that it is exercised toward man as a sinner. How He has dealt with the inhabitants of other worlds we may never fully know. But we know of one world which has strayed from its orbit. And we know that while the ninety nine secured sheep were housed in the heavenly fold, the good shepherd came to seek the one which was lost. Six thousand years have flown by. Sin has held high its hand in hostile attitude against the heavens. But for all this, his hand laden with blessings, is still stretched out.

Under the head of the "goodness of God" should be included His mercy which is not a separate attribute of God, but a modification of His goodness. Mercy flows from His goodness as the stream from the fountain. If there had been no suffering and no sin, there would still have been *goodness* ; but could have been no *mercy*. But when sin entered the world, *mercy* gushed up in the heart of Deity. *Mercy* framed the scheme of redemption. *Mercy* seeks out the wanderer, and pardons all who are truly penitent. God is called "the Father of mercies," he is said to be "rich in mercies," "very pitiful and of tender mercy." Under these views, David cries out, "Bless the Lord," &c.

1. His goodness and mercy are *infinite*. "His mercy as great as His power."

2. Being infinite it is *immutable*. It flows not like the tide, not like wet weather springs, but like the river whose streams flow along, whose banks are always full.

3. Being immutable it is *eternal*. It went forth toward the first creature of His power, it has run on from generation to generation, and will flow on for ever.

4. It is *active*. His love is not like an ocean that forever sleeps, but it is employed in diffusing hap-

piness among all worlds, and all their inhabitants.
“Like the sun.”

5. God being infinitely good, views with complacency only such characters and acts as resemble His. Hence, “saints are lovely in His sight.” Sinners He loves with the love of pity ; but He can exercise toward them no complacent regard. Moral purity can alone secure His favor.

6. “God is love,” and He demands your love. Such love should be reciprocated. Let a tide of holy affections set in toward the heavens.

7. The Lord is of great mercy, “Be ye therefore merciful.” Go forth on errands of mercy to the lost. Relieve the distressed, comfort the mourner, instruct the ignorant, visit the fatherless, relieve the widow. So shall ye be like your Heavenly Father, and be rewarded with His smile.

PARABLES OF JESUS.

SERIES.—FIFTEEN SERMONS.

SERMON XIX.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Matt. xiii: 3-9.—Behold a sower went forth to sow," &c.

When the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the *foolishness of preaching* to save them that believe. The adaptation of the means to the end, is exhibited both by the reason of the thing and by actual experiment. But while those who *believe* are saved, those who *reject* are hardened.

Our Savior embodies these principles in the beautiful parable before us. He divides the hearers of the Gospel into four general classes.

1. The way-side hearers.

These are such as hear the Gospel not statedly, and of principle, but casually and under the promptings of low motives. They come to the house of God as they would to a play or a lecture. They would prefer the latter, but then a sermon is better than nothing, and the sanctuary better than no place.

And as low motives prompt them to hear the word at all, they itinerate from Church to Church as inclination or fancy leads. A more popular preacher, a finer choir, or gayer company is a sufficient inducement to leave the house where their fathers worshiped; and a gust of wind or a threatening clond, the absence of a fancy article of dress, or the visit of a friend is sufficient to detain them altogether.

Now the absence of this first and lowest class of hearers could be hardly a cause of regret, did not the *same causes* work the *same results*, in many who profess to belong to another class. Our Savior says of such that they hear the word and understand it not. The human mind is composed of three departments, the understanding, the sensibilities and the will.

Now the highest results of the preached word cannot be reached without laying hold of each of these departments. But here it falls short of the first. It reaches not to the understanding. It falls upon the ear like sounding brass. Neither the sermon or text is remembered. Why? the attention was not arrested. The understanding not exercised. This was the condition of the hearers in Ezekiel's time, Ezek. xxxiii : 30, "Also thou son," &c., "*The fowls* devour the scattered seed." The devil has no objection to men's hearing the word in this manner.

II. The second class of hearers are represented by the thorny ground.

These rank higher than the former because they attain an understanding of the truths and the duties taught. This is where the operations of the Spirit *commence*, but alas ! in the case of this class here they also *close*.

The judgment apprehends the truth, admits its rationality and there stops. If the truth do not travel back beyond the judgment it will be attended by no sanctifying results.

Not unfrequently will the heart reject what the understanding has approved. The sublime enunciations of Scriptures are *admitted as verities* but *treated as fables*. Such persons present not only a sad specimen of the inconsistency of an unrenewed heart but they are in a nearly hopeless condition. With the truths and motives of the word of God they have made themselves familiar. Tell them religion is important and they admit it. Truth has long been welcome to the understanding but has been resolutely excluded from the heart. Their religion is one of pure intellect. "They see the right and they approve it too." "They know their duty but they do it not." In this case no fault is found with the soil. That which will produce thorns would also produce wheat. But it is preoccupied with cares, riches and lusts. Oh !

the "deceitfulness of riches," they smile to betray, they promise only to deceive. These are the thorns which choke the word.

III. We pass to the stony ground hearers. Although there was not *much earth* there was some. The seed was the same. It found a welcome admittance to the heart. It sprung up in hopeful precocity and gave promise of an early and large crop. But when the sun of persecution arose, &c. Here the *judgment* subscribes to the truth and the sensibilities embrace it and warm it into a hopeful condition. But alas! there is unbroken rock beneath.

True, he receives the word with *joy*. Perception of truth makes him happy. Its relation to his salvation makes him happy. He rejoices, and his friends rejoice. But is this religion? He has joy, and his joy is the product of operative truth. As far as he has gone he has gone right. But there has been no self-crucifixion. The understanding and the affections have both been influenced, but the will has been unbroken, a rock of selfishness underlies the promising surface. Demand sacrifice and suffering at his hand. Touch the idols enshrined in the heart and you discover the dominion of the world. Selfishness which had secreted itself in the soul, starts into sight with malignant opposition to God and holiness. Now what we condemn in these hearers is that they bring

no fruit to perfection. The judgment did its office well. The sensibilities were duly awake. But the *root* of the matter was not in them. Persecution found them unprepared to breast the storm. When the floods arose and beat upon their house it fell.

IV. The last class of hearers specified in this parable and those commended by Christ are such as hear, approve, are affected by the word, and bring forth appropriate fruits.

It convinces the understanding.

It arouses the sensibilities.

It subdues the will.

“The gospel came not in word only but in power.” It leads on to holiness of heart and life, {repentance, faith, humility and love. A cordial acquiescence in God’s will characterizes him who has rightly embraced the gospel.

He brings forth fruit thirty, sixty and a hundred fold. He has his fruit unto holiness. and the end everlasting life.

INFERENCES.

I. We learn the inutility of hearing the gospel in the manner in which the first three classes do.

1. The first has ears but does not hear.

2. The second hears, and is convinced, but those mighty springs of action, the passions, are not allowed to stir.

3. The third class receives the word with joy, but do not so fully receive it as to be prepared for times of trial. They want a religion to save them from hell, not from their sins. The heaven they desire is a heaven of ecstasy and not of purity.¹

4. There is no safety then but in so receiving the Gospel as to make it the only and eternal portion. You must *have root in yourselves*. That strata of rock in the heart must be broken up, and the roots of the Gospel seed penetrate to the depths of the soul.

II. We see the danger of resting satisfied with a state of experience below what the Gospel requires. You may believe much, feel much, and enjoy much, and yet be on unsafe ground.

III. We discover the reason why many who in times of religious revival appear engaged, subsequently lose their interest and become assimilated to the world. They have no root in *themselves*.

Rest not satisfied with mental illumination, nor with emotional experience. Venture on a warfare with every sin. The struggle I know may be severe. But the result cannot be doubtful. Victory after victory will be achieved. Idol after idol will fall and the Holy Ghost dwell in his own purified temple and victory sit crowned in the centre of the heart.

SERMON XX.

THE TARES AND WHEAT.

Matt. xiii : 24-30.—“The kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field ; but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way,” &c.

The parable of the tares and the wheat is a history of the world in miniature, reaching backward to the creation, and forward to the judgment day.

It is replete with instruction, and is interpreted by Christ himself. It unfolds the great facts in relation to the moral history of our world, and in relation to its eventful destiny.

1. Man was originally created in a state of moral purity. This theory alone is compatible with the doctrine that God is perfectly and absolutely good. The offspring of his goodness, the monument of his power, man could not have been corrupt at the outset of his history. The source whence he springs the benediction pronounced upon him, and the distinct assertions of revelation, attest man's primeval purity. This parable clearly announces this.

(a) The sower is the Son of Man. This one of the titles of Christ, and Christ is the maker of man.

(b) The field is the *world*, not (as some say,) the *church*.

(c) Good seed was first sown. Tares were of a later introduction, and were scattered by the hand of an enemy. What a lovely scene did earth at first present. How worthy of its author!

2. We come to consider the painful fact that evil found its way into these fair regions which the Creator's hand had made. Among the good seed, *tares* were scattered by the hand of an enemy. That evil has *in some way* found entrance into the world is matter of fact. *How* and *whence* it came are questions long discussed in the world.

(a) Some heathen philosophers have taught that *matter* was essentially corrupt.

(b) Some that there are *two Gods*.

(c) Some that man existed in a pre-existent state, and that this world is a great moral hospital fitted up for His recovery to purity and holiness.

The Scripture account is, "An enemy hath done this and that enemy is the Devil." It traces the sorrows and sins of our race to the temptations of the devil, and the abuse of moral freedom. But how is this compatible with the goodness of God? Let us see.

(a) Evil is the absence of some good. This is essential to *variety* as variety is to perfection. In this

sense there is none good but *God*. The heavens are relatively impure in His sight, and His angels He charges with folly.

(b) It is natural, flowing from moral evil, and is either *disciplinary* or *penal*, and in either case it may be better for us than unmixed good.

(c) It is moral, arising from an abuse of moral freedom, which is a necessary element in a being capable of knowing, loving, and serving God. If it be asked could not God have made beings incapable of sinning? I answer, He could have peopled earth with stocks, and owls, and beasts of prey, but these could not have admired his works, nor offered him worship and praise. "A horse," says Augustine, "who goes astray is more noble than a stone which cannot go astray." So it pleased God to make a being who could transgress, and the mournful history of man is that he did transgress. Thus evil exists without any impeachment of the Divine character.

3. There is disclosed to us the *fact* that the righteous and the wicked will exist together until the end of the world. The servants upon beholding the tares sprouting in the fair field of their Lord, proposed to root them up. This seems natural. Separate the evil from the good is the hasty judgment of man: "Wilt thou that we cause fire to come down from heaven." But the great Proprietor judges otherwise. "Let

both grow together." We look, to be sure, for the gospel to prevail gloriously, but evil though restrained on earth will only be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming.

4. The reasons of this are also unfolded by the parable.

(a) To secure the continued existence of the good. If the work of extirpation were assigned to men, they could not know the tares, nor spare the wheat. So without a miracle, a famine or pestilence which should destroy the wicked would also cut down the good. Two causes saved Ninevah.

(1.) Its penitence. (2.) Its 120,000 infants.

(b) They are spared as illustrious proofs of the long suffering of God. They are *monuments* of his mercy.

(c) To furnish them every possible facility for repentance. Some say I have had no time. What has become of your Sabbaths?

(d) Finally, the wicked live in answer to prayer. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom. Moses saved the Israelites.

5. This parable proves that the world is to have an *end*. "The harvest is the end." That this world was created to last but for a time and then be consumed, is clearly asserted by the apostle Peter. The great harvest of the world will soon be reaped. Descending angels shall sing the requiem of earth and pro-

claim that time was, time is, but time shall be no longer.

6. The parable gives a fearful intimation of the sinner's doom. The *parable* says, "Gather the tares into bundles and burn them." The *interpretation* is, "God will send forth his angels and gather," &c. Men have sought to interpret away the meaning of the Divine Interpreter, and rob these words of all their meaning and force. Yet here stands the unweakened testimony of Christ himself.

7. We have exhibited before us, finally, the lofty and glorious state to which the righteous shall be exalted. "Then shall the righteous," &c. The sun is the most magnificent object within the range of our vision, and is to us the source of unnumbered benefits and blessings, and this is the lofty object by which the Savior represents the glory of the finally saved. And after that sun has spent its fires and veiled its face with sackcloth, and all its sister planets cease to shine; still shall the righteous soar, and sing, and shine in the kingdom.

There with the righteous exalted to the homes and the joys of heaven, and with the wicked burning perpetually, yet unconsumed in the "furnace of fire," we leave the lofty theme. True, man will then only have commenced the race of life, his road of being stretches before him and will never have an end. But

to what heights he may arise, or to what depths descend will only be unfolded as we sweep on into its mysterious realities.

SERMON XXI.

THE LEAVEN.

Matt. xiii : 33.—“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal,” &c.

The parables of Christ, although truthful representations of the great facts and doctrines which Jesus proclaimed, yet contain some phrases and allusions which are merely incidental to the main design, and not intended to receive an illustration as though they were an essential part of the parable. If we can reach the *main design* of the parable, it is not wise to push our inquiries into the meaning of what is merely *incidental*, thrown in to give symmetry and completeness to the parabolic representation. Forgetting this rule, men have speculated upon the meaning of the *woman*, the *three* measures of meal, &c. A woman is the actor here, because it is her more especial work to have to do with the culinary art, and three measures designated, because this was about the quantity usu-

ally prepared for the oven at once. Leaven is an article of such constant use in the culinary art that I need spend no time in speaking of its nature and effect. On account of its diffusive, assimilating and transforming principles, and on account of the changes which it produces on the mass with which it is mingled, it is chosen by Christ to represent *His grace*; and the effect which leaven produces, is made to represent the effect of grace upon the heart.

For similar reasons, in the Old Testament leaven is made to represent sin, which is also an active, assimilating and transforming principle. On the Passover week the Jews were not permitted to eat leavened bread, and on some of their most holy days were not permitted to have it in their houses. On reference to this fact, and to the fact that leaven is made to represent sin in the Old Testament, the apostle says, "Purge out the old leaven."

What thus, on account of certain properties, represents *sin* working in the heart, with equal propriety represents *grace*, the opposite of sin. Both are operative, but they work in opposite directions; both are assimilating, transforming the soul to its own nature; one draws downward, the other upward; one vitiates and destroys, the other sanctifies and saves.

We have now before us a general exposition of this parable. While the preceding one illustrates the tri-

umphs of the Gospel *in the world*, this points out the workings of grace *in the soul*. The appropriateness of the parabolic representation is seen in the following respects :

1. Leaven is a foreign element. It belongs not to the mass to be affected by it, but it is introduced into it by a living agent. So the grace of God inheres not in human nature. In our hearts are lodged the seeds of sin. If not counteracted the result will be that the man will be utterly vitiated and ultimately overwhelmed in everlasting ruin. The grace of God comes in with its *restraining, converting* and *saving* power, to prevent results so ruinous. It comes from God, through Jesus Christ as its dispenser. If, Christians, you are holier and happier than other men, never forget that "by the grace of God you are what you are"—that "it is God who maketh you to differ."

2. I have observed that leaven is an *active* and an *assimilating* agent. Introduced into a heavy, unseemly and unpalatable mass, it at once commences to work, and it continues its processes until it has modified the entire mass. So grace in the heart is active. If you see one who is professedly a renewed man, but one whose heart and whose life have not been modified and improved by his religion, you behold either a deceived man or a deceiver,—one who

holds a lie in his right hand, or one who has stolen the livery, &c.

3. Again: the changes wrought by leaven are beneficent changes. I need not speak of the chemical action and effects of leaven, but it is introduced to secure a good end, and its legitimate effect is to convert an almost putrescent mass into man's most necessary food. By such means we have our daily bread. So grace in the heart always produces benevolent changes. It takes a sinner and changes him from sin to holiness—it turns him from Satan to God. It reverses the current of his thoughts, his sympathies his affections, and his enjoyments.

4. Now, while these changes are thus marked and beneficent, they are nevertheless produced by processes invisible to the eye and sometimes inscrutable to the mind of man. Leaven works gradually, silently and insensibly, and yet ceaselessly and strongly—works until the whole is leavened. Pardon, regeneration and adoption are, of course, instantaneous works. But all the processes which are antecedent to, and consequent upon, justification are gradual. Every Christian's experience, however bright and glorious, had a humble beginning. See that mighty river! It had a humble fountain away among the hills. I see a patriarch Christian! He is passing home with a character ripe for the skies and his bosom laden

with sheaves,—all is the result of some little seed dropped in his heart away back in childhood. Mark the similes of Scripture. “First the blade, then the ear,” &c. “The path of the just is as a,” &c. See the prodigal son! After long waywardness and sin he returns a humble penitent. What has produced such a result? Ah! he *thought* with himself. The infidel calculating the dimensions of the New Jerusalem. Despise not the day of small things. Crush not out thy serious thoughts! Entertain them. It may be saving leaven which shall transform thy nature and save thy soul.

5. Mark, finally, the completeness of the leavening process, “till the *whole*.” As the leaven continues to diffuse itself until the whole inert mass feels its quickening and transforming presence and power, so grace really possessed, and unresisted, will work on the great deep of the soul until all its powers and all its affections are transformed into the image of Christ. It comes to the dark *understanding* and illuminates it. It comes to the perverted *judgment* and rectifies it. It comes to the accusing *conscience* and purifies it. It comes to the obstinate *will* and subdues it. It will spread its hallowed reign over all the soul, and bring *every thought* into captivity to the law of Christ. But leaven does not always produce these results. Here the explanation is that some of the conditions are lack.

ing, or some neutralizing agent is present to prevent the desired and expected result. So, if you cherish worldly mindedness, sensuality or pride, you neutralize the grace of God. Hence, we are exhorted not to "receive the grace of God in vain." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit."

Now, by this token, you may surely know whether the grace of God has been a living and operating principle in thy heart. Leaven is not for long years producing its results; it does so in a few hours or in a single day. Now, I will not say that grace will in a day or year produce these results; but there will and must be a tendency and progress towards it. There must be an approximating towards entire purity,—a growing moral resemblance to Christ. You must be holy or you cannot be happy, you cannot be useful, you cannot enter heaven. You have professed to have the leaven of grace in your heart for many a year. Is it true that it has been thus operating in thy heart so long, and not yet produced a heart "perfect, and right, and pure, and good?" Has not the salt lost its savor? Or do you still feel the operations of the sacred leaven? Oh! yield to its transforming power, and it will work in you until your whole soul and body be sanctified wholly. And, finally, delivered from earth, your probationary abode, you shall be translated to heaven, your immortal home, where glory shall crown what grace on earth begun.

SERMON XXII.

THE GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

Matt. xii : 31-32.—“ The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed.”

“ I have used *similitudes* by the ministry of my prophets,” said God by Hosea when communicating the processes He had employed to instruct His people. He had not only spoken plainly, but had employed symbols, types and figures, to illustrate the truth. Christ adopted the same plan ; and He selected his illustrations from facts and things with which they were well acquainted. By this means He secured their attention, rendered His addresses pleasing and instructive, held the prejudices of His hearers in check, and fixed great truths in their minds.

This parable, like the two preceding, is taken from agricultural life. In the parable of *the sower*, He had classified the hearers of the Gospel, &c., in that of the *tares and wheat*, He had unfolded several great facts in the moral history of the world, and in this He sketches prospectively the progress and final triumph of His own Gospel in the world.

The mustard seed is small, and it would seem might

be lost and forgotten when cast into the soil, but in the East it literally became a great tree. A Jewish Rabbi, says one grew in his garden into which he climbed as into a fig-tree. And as the insignificant and unpromising mustard seed expands into the tree, so the Church of God on earth is destined to grow to vast dimensions, spread over all lands, and like the waters of the ocean, to cover the earth.

We shall leave here the parable proper and take a rapid view of the Church of God, retrospectively as furnished in history and prospectively as sketched in prophecy.

We are standing on the stream of history, whether far up among its fountains, or down near where its waters lose themselves in the ocean of unchanging being, a cursory glance will not enable us to determine.

The light of history falls backwards, and some of the transactions of the past are revealed, but others *lie hid in the deep dark valleys*. But if the past be only partially unfolded the future is more unknown. The wave of current events laves our footsteps and then sweeps on, and no *human eye can trace it to its end*. Analogy indicates what may be, presentiment utters her voice; but we are not left to these, *for there are beacons kindled on the shores of eternity, &c.*

Christianity is a *fact* which history must not ignore, a vast actuality of which philosophy must give an account. It is a kingdom among the kingdoms. In its organized form it stretches through all time.

It is apparent, too, that the power of Mahomedanism is well nigh broken. The recent events in Europe, have demonstrated that there is no inherent vitality in the system. The Ottoman Empire, the great shield of Mahomedanism is held together by the influence and arms of Protestant England and Catholic France, and while these allies are pledged to preserve the integrity of the empire, neither are pledged to perpetuate the Mahomedan faith. Neither can have any motive for upholding a system founded in imposture, which was propagated by the sword, and which stands in the way of all human progress and elevation, as well as of the salvation of men.

Accordingly before entering upon the recent struggle with Russia, the allies demanded of Turkey, the civil emancipation of the Christian subjects, which amounts in effect to the abandonment of Mahomedanism as a state religion, and having a fair and open field for Christian effort. The mufti, the ecclesiastical head of the empire, foreseeing the effect of this concession of the Sultan, entered his protest against it, but the Sultan knowing it to be a necessary step to

secure the adhesion of his allies, dismissed the mufti and appointed to that high office a man of more liberal views, if not of more facile conscience.

Thus while the fifth angel shall pour out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom shall be full of darkness, the sixth may be just at hand to pour out his, upon the great river Euphrates, that the waters thereof may be dried up, or in other words that Turkish and Mahomedan domination may cease forever.

(This sketch left incomplete. The drift of the argument is easily seen.)

SERMON XXIII.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

Matt. xiii: 44.—“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field,” &c.

There is room for some diversity of opinion on the question whether the treasure referred to was one which had been lost or concealed by men, or whether it was a natural treasure as a mine of gold, or some other precious metal.

The weight of authority, if not evidence, is in favor

of the latter idea. He who buys a field acquires a right to all the natural treasures which that field embodies, but not to the developed wealth deposited there on purpose, or lost by accident. Gold, like granite, unless retained, goes with the soil. There is at this moment, a man whose name is familiar to the lips of every person in the land, whose history at one period of his life may be brought to illustrate this parable.

He found a rich treasure in the gold regions of Maraposa, and he went and sold all and bought that field, and thus it is said bought exhaustless wealth.

A general exposition of the parable may now be given thus.

I. The Gospel is a great treasure.

II. It is hidden from many.

III. It is found by some.

IV. It is secured by those who sell all.

V. Such are constituted rich and happy for both worlds.

I. The Gospel is a treasure.

No pursuit among men is so engrossing and general as the pursuit of wealth, and it is usually pursued not as a *means*, but as an *end*. Now if the legitimate end of wealth be happiness, protection of our rights or usefulness to others,—I submit that *religion* secures

these ends, and that thus it is really great wealth. But particularly.

1. It is a treasure of precious truths. *California* may contain may a golden nugget, but *the Gospel* reveals golden truths, the knowledge of which makes men wise unto salvation. Take these truths from the world and the great light of intellect and Christianity are extinguished. Many in their thoughtlessness have said that the heathen are as well off as we are. But at what price will you part with all you know of God, Christ, duty and immortality, and take in place the profound ignorance of the heathen world? The Gospel is the great sun that pours down light on the nations. It is the grand aperture through which voices from Eternity speak to us. It is a revelation of mysteries which have been hid from the foundation of the world. It is a disclosure of the mind and will of God.

2. It is a treasure of enjoyment to the individual possessor. That is a real treasure which brings peace and happiness in its train. Wealth does not do this. However ample one's possession, "Still unenjoyed the present store, still endless sighs are breathed for more." In complaining and longing his days and nights pass away, and, "A cruel *something* unpossessed, corrodes and poisons all the rest." But true religion is an unfailing fountain of joy.

3. It is a treasure to the world by the practical blessings it brings. In its wake spring up social amenities, domestic joys, educational facilities, charitable institutions, neighborhood and international peace. From its general reception spring the virtues of justice, reciprocity, mercy, everything which makes life pleasant, which adorns the character and garnishes the soul for heaven.

4. It is a treasure of eternal life. It plumes the spirit for an endless sweep of duration and blessedness in the kingdom of heaven.

II. When now it is said that this gospel treasure is *hidden*, it is meant that it is concealed from those who have no knowledge of, or care for it. It is hidden from *the heathen world* where its light does not shine. It was hidden from *the Jews* in their types and sacrifices ; for to them "The spirit was in the letter lost, the substance in the shade." And now, if our gospel be hid it is hid to those who are lost, whose eyes are blinded by the God of this world. It is hidden from them because they are not persuaded of its truth, or impressed with its vast importance. It is hidden from them because its motives and principles are such as are inscrutable to them. The man of the world can comprehend the man of the world, but "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit for they are

foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."

These things are hid from the wise and prudent, but are revealed to babes. The princes of the world know them not. Prejudice, worldliness and carelessness conceal the preciousness of the gospel, and not until these are penetrated or removed, does its truth and glory appear.

III. But the man in the parable found this treasure; and blessed be God, many men have found the treasure of salvation. To find it requires,

1. Careful consideration and inquiry. The gold fields of California had been traveled over by stupid Indians and Mexicans for generations, but they had not found the precious metal; but as soon as they became American possessions, curious eyes discovered what had been hid from the foundation of the world. And there are men living amid the gospel's blazing light, who are in darkness, and, when exhaustless treasures are at hand, who are poor.

Bow down thine ear, oh! proud man, to hear the truths which so deeply concern thee. Pause amid the storm of worldly strife, and step aside from the rude jostlings of the world, and see if there are not interests more precious than any which have hitherto occupied thy thoughts! Beneath the rubbish of earthly interests is a mine of virgin gold, to possess

which will enrich you for eternity. "Here may the wretched sons of want," &c.

2. It requires diligent search. We are commanded to search for it as for hid treasures. The woman seeking her lost silver.

IV. The parable unfolds the condition on which this heavenly treasure may become ours. When we become so impressed with a sense of its value, and so earnest in its pursuit, as to *sell all*, in order to obtain it, we are sure to become its joyful possessors. Multitudes live in sight of the blessings, and with some desire to secure it, but they do not seek it with all the heart, they do not *sell all* to obtain it. One cannot sell his farm, another cannot sell his friends, another cannot sell his reputation, the drunkard cannot sell his drink, the proud beauty, her vanity. Each has some cherished treasure. "Some cursed thing unknown," &c. You say it is hard to part with all these. Well, you *can* retain them, but you cannot buy the priceless pearl. I tell you it will take all you have to buy it. If you are as poor as poverty you can buy it, if you will give *all* you have. And if as rich as Cræsus you can't buy unless you give all you've got. Oh! I am anxious that all my hearers should buy this treasure and buy it *at this price*, for I know that there is no man who hath left father or mother, or houses or lands, but shall receive a hun-

dred fold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

V. We remark finally, that the man who buys this heavenly treasure is constituted rich and happy for time and eternity. I do not envy the man who owns a mine of gold, if he has no Christ with him, and no good hope of heaven before him. The world is poor from shore to shore. Its honors, wealth, and pleasures are poor and mean, not worth a wish or thought, but "Religion! what treasures untold." This joy is spiritual and increasing, and at the grave it melts away into the light and joy of heaven.

INFERENCES.

1. How thankful we should be for the Gospel. Our gratitude should be proportioned to the greatness of the benefaction conferred upon us.

2. We should be greatly anxious to be assured of the validity of our title to our treasure. Many a man has accounted himself rich, but found in the upturning of things that his title was defective. Your title may once have been good to your farm, but it may now be covered with mortgage and judgments, and your title be embarrassed if not utterly vitiated. Oh! beware lest while you exclaim, "I am rich," God say, "thou art poor and miserable."

3. Unlike all other treasures, all may be proprietors of it. You may enjoy it yourself and distribute it to

others. It will not diminish in value though other share it with you. Recommend it to impoverished, perishing sinners around you.

4. Finally, "Buy the truth, but sell it not. Hold it fast, let it not go, for it is thy life.

SERMON XXIV.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

Matt. xiii : 45.—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls," &c.

Pearls are rare and beautiful precious stones, which have an animal origin, being found in certain species of oysters and muscles. They have been found mostly in the Caspian Sea and adjacent waters, and are brought up by divers, at great peril of health and life. In our own country pearls have recently been found, in considerable quantities, in the shallow streams along the Atlantic seaboard, and the discovery has awakened the liveliest interest among such as aspire to great and sudden wealth. Perhaps by goodly pearls, our Saviour intended to speak of precious stones in general, of which there are several varieties more valuable than the pearl, the most rare and costly of

which is the diamond. There is one diamond, now the property of Queen Victoria, upon which a fabulous price is set, which has been the pride of the old monarchs of India, and to gain possession of which fierce wars have been waged, and much blood shed. It is called the "Koh-i-noor," or "Mountain of Light," and formed one of the attractions of the World's Fair at London. Such a precious treasure the "merchant-man" of the text found, and, selling all that he had, he became its opulent and happy possessor. To this pearl "the kingdom of heaven" is compared, which embraces the two ideas—of grace in its commencement, development and triumphs in the heart of man on earth, and the full measure of his perfected joy in heaven. These, indeed, are but parts of one comprehensive system ; they are the beginning and results, the Alpha and Omega.

The pearl, then, is piety, with all its antecedents, its adjuncts, and its everlasting and glorious consequences. If you can trace this principle to its source, if you can mark its benign operations, if you can ascertain its full results, you can approximate the value of "the pearl of great price." You cannot do this by an arithmetical calculation. All the world would be no price for a jewel like this, whose maker is God, and and the possession of which loads one down with enduring riches. Anterior to the possession of this jewel,

there must be light shed upon the understanding and conviction inspired in the soul. A desire, as ardent and quenchless as that of the miser for gold, must be inspired in the heart. And such a desire, when it becomes supreme and overpowering, overriding every counteracting propensity and desire, is a certain premonition of the attainment of the blessing desired. But the genuineness of this desire will be subjected to very searching tests. If, after every test, this desire maintains its supremacy, if the favor of the Lord be sought and desired at the sacrifice of every other interest, then, as the Lord liveth, that man is not far from the kingdom of God. He is prepared to do as did the merchantman in the parable, who, in his searches, finds a pearl of great price, and to secure it parts with all he has. We should account a man reckless who would literally part with everything to secure a single pearl, and yet there are few men in the world whose wealth would purchase the more costly precious stones which are known to exist.

The pearl which Cleopatra dissolved and drank to the health of Mark Antony, was estimated by Pliny at \$875,000. The great Russian diamond is valued at \$1,500,000. The celebrated Regent diamond, among the crown jewels of France, is estimated at \$2,000,000. One in the Austrian diadem at \$450,000. The largest diamond known is that of the King of Portu-

gal, and is valued at \$250,000,000, [and the famous "Mountain of Light" of Queen Victoria is said to be equal in value to half the daily expenses of the whole world.

And yet these jewels which sparkle in the diadems of the monarchs of the earth, the estimated value of which staggers our belief, and almost our conception, are really and inherently worthless. In a utilitarian point of view they are not worth, the whole of them, a brass pin, for a pin is useful, but pearls meet not one of the demands of life or godliness. They will neither clothe us nor feed us; they can be wrought into no fabric or utensil needed by man; they promote neither intellectual improvement nor social refinement nor moral elevation. They do at best only gratify the lust of the eye and the pride of life, they feed the flame of vanity, they widen the breach in the brotherhood of the race, they secularize the soul and turn it away from God.

It is believed all through India that the possession of the "Koh-i-noor" is the presage of evil to the owner. So it has proved to the sovereigns of India, and so it may prove to Queen Victoria, who, in the possible loss of India, sees the brightest jewel of her crown jeopardized. But however this may be, we know that the "kingdom of heaven" is the harbinger and procurer of happiness and safety; a talisman against

every real ill ; a shield against every enemy ; a magnet that attracts to itself every excellent thing ; an inheritance that endows its possessor with more than princely possessions here and constitutes him an heir of heaven. "*The white stone*," with a name written on it known only to its possessor, is a title of sonship to the King of kings, and of heirship to "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." *For what is this "kingdom of heaven" to which the goodly pearl is compared?* "It is *righteousness and peace and joy.*" Can you desire, can you conceive a richer inheritance than this? "*Righteousness*,"—rectitude of heart and life, not according to a human and fallible standard, but according to the decisions of the great searcher of hearts. "This lies at the foundation of every excellence, and all safety ; and this is the robe of fine linen, clean and white, with which the saints shall be arrayed at last.

This kingdom is *peace*. I would that I could convey to your minds the deep significance and blessed import of this word, *peace*. I do not speak of peace in the nation, in the neighborhood, in the family, although all these are in the train of piety, but I speak of peace in the soul. There may be storms around, but as the lake slumbers on when the tempest wars on the surrounding hills, so the soul, in communion with God, maintains its calm, deep, blessed peace, amid all

the storms and commotions of life. This is a peace to sensual minds unknown. It is the great peace which they have who love the Lord; it is the peace which Jesus gave to His disciples as His last best legacy; it is the peace of God which keeps the soul in the knowledge and love of God, and which passeth all understanding. It blesseth its possessor in the morning, it cheers him amid the labors of the day, it illumines him amid the darkness of the night. It is a substitute for the world's wealth and favor and smiles. Kings cannot buy it with all their wealth, the epicure cannot find it among his viands, it is sought in vain in the halls of fashion and pleasure. But it blesses the widow in her desolation, the poor man at his toils, the navigator on the swelling seas; it enables the dying saint to rejoice and makes the tongue of the martyr sing when the flames leap and hiss around him. And at times, at least, it swells out into overpowering and rapturous joy. As the mountain range holds on for many a league in its mighty elevation, but now and then sends up a peak to an altitude above the eagle's boldest flight, so religion's peace is always above the fogs and clouds of a cold and stormy world, but sometimes it swells upward toward the excellent glory, where the traveler seems to hear the lutes of angels, and then we call it "joy in the Holy Ghost." Or, as the river flows on with full banks through many a

smiling clime, and now and then swells out into crystal lakes, and then mingles with the waters of the boundless ocean, so the *peace* of the Christian "is like a river," his joy is like the spreading and deepening waters of the lake, and his "righteousness is like the waves of the sea." "The *work* of righteousness is peace, and the *effect* of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever."

Do you, my fellow man, desire this goodly pearl? Then go and sell all you have and buy it. This implies nothing less than the surrender of your all to God. Let your judgment yield to the claims of God; let your affections let go their grasp on the world and cling to the cross; let your *will* be surrendered to Christ. Part with every idol, however cherished, give up every sin, however dear. Break away from every unholy *intimacy*; renounce utterly and forever, every sinful *habit*; "sell all that you have," keep back no part of the price, and then thou shalt become the joyful possessor of the pearl of great price and be a happy heir of the kingdom of heaven. And this kingdom, begun thus on earth, culminates in heaven. There it swells out to its full proportions, its righteousness shall be as the noonday light, its peace shall be amplified and made permanent, its joy shall be uncommenced and unending. Each bearer of the goodly pearl shall be admitted through the gates of pearl and walk the streets of gold.

SERMON XXV.

THE NET AND FISHES.

Matt. xiii: 47-50.—The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea," &c.

Not only are the heavens and the earth full of the goodness of the Lord, but so also is this great, sea wherein are things creeping innumerable.

It was meet that the Savior in illustrating the nature and workings of His kingdom, should select His illustrations from *all* the avocations of men. And as multitudes do business in the great waters and draw their treasures from the bosom of the deep, it was not to be expected that they would be passed over. Especially since several of his disciples were fishermen.

We come now to a general exposition of the parable.

1. The *sea* (like the field) represents the world. It is so used in many other places. John saw a beast come up out of the *sea*.

2. The *fishes* are the earth's inhabitants. Among the Jews, the fish as well as other animals were accounted clean or unclean, and when the latter were

taken by Jewish fishermen, they were immediately cast away and left to perish on the shore.

3. The *net* is the Gospel. As the former is *designed* to catch fish the latter is designed to catch men.

4. The fishermen are ministers and others who present the motives of the Gospel. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

5. The fact is stated that fishermen gather both clean and unclean into their net, and this implies that different characters are here gathered into the visible church. You are probably familiar with the process of fishing with nets. The net furnished with sinkers and floaters, is carried around an area of the waters, and many within its sweep are entangled in the meshes of the net and brought to the shore. The fishermen, then assort them, reserving the good for the market and the king's table, while the vile and the worthless are (not returned to the waters,) but cast away and destroyed.

And this brings out the fact already stated, the lamentable, the alarming fact that, comprehended in the visible church, reckoned its membership, and coming to its altars, are men of unrenewed hearts, and when it can with impunity be done, leading unholy lives. These individuals have different names according to their character and motives. We mention,

(1.) Hypocrites. These have always had a place in

the church. They assume an air of sanctity, nay of superior and exclusive sanctity. Such were the Pharisees whom Christ so severely admonished and threatened. "Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees." They are found in every church. Their motives are various.

(a) One to secure respectability.

(b) One to get patronage.

(c) One to get friends.

And having once assumed the profession of religion, they dislike to admit direct villainy, to admit low or unholy motives, and hence remain in the church until the great trying day.

(2.) Formalists. These are such as have the form of Godliness only. They are mostly deceived persons, who bring the standard of religion down instead of elevating themselves to the standard of true piety. They satisfy themselves with the performance of a few duties while the religion of the heart is ignored and opposed. "They are at ease in Zion."

(3.) Backsliders. These were once truly converted. They remember now the day of their espousals, but their joy and love are gone, and they sing mournfully, "Where is the blessedness I knew." They hold on to some forms of piety, but their faith is eclipsed, their zeal has expired, and their hearts are filled with sorrow. Now, I am not of course saying that all these classes have been caught in the Gospel net, that is,

saved by the Gospel, but this virgin gold, has given currency to much base alloy, the Gospel has affected them, and it has become to them a system of defence against the accusations of their own conscience, and the onsets of such as would save them. They make use of it, or rather they abuse it, by misapplying its promises, by passing its denunciations over to others, by vainly hoping that because the system and its author are merciful, therefore, they are safe.

But in the net of the Jewish fishermen, were not only the ceremonially unclean who found their way into the net, but many that were clean and valuable. So, in the church are not only the classes named, but also a vast number of true believers. The net is spread only to catch fish suitable for food, others come in incidentally, and the fishermen have no means to prevent it, so the Gospel net is thrown to enclose only such as shall be saved, but others intrude, deceiving the ministry and the church, and thus for a time, the precious and the vile exist together.

6. But the parable teaches that a day of discrimination and separation shall come when the wicked shall be separated from the just, and cast into a furnace of fire where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This momentous truth is taught not by a shadowy parable alone, the meaning of which may be perverted, but

by the positive announcements of Him who came down from heaven, whose knowledge cannot be questioned, and whose veracity cannot be impeached. The parable of the tares had taught us that the righteous and the wicked will dwell on earth together down to the end of time, and this one teaches us, that even the hallowed precincts of the church will frequently be invaded by the tread of unhallowed feet until the eye and hand of an all-discriminating Judge shall effect a complete separation. If the Bible had not taught us this alarming fact, if there had been no Judas among the apostles, and no Simon Magus, or Demas, or Diotrephes among the membership of the apostolic churches, if Christ had not sent His warning letters to the seven churches of Asia, laying open their mixed character, still the experience of the church attests this alarming truth. Alas! alas! there are deceivers and deceived men, there are formalists and backsliders in every church. Be their doctrines ever so pure, their discipline ever so rigid, because men cannot know the heart, and because it is the duty of the church to "believe all things, to hope all things, and to endure all things," a church of which the entire membership are holy, can never be expected to exist on earth. She can expel the openly corrupt, the thief, the liar, the Sabbath breaker, and the drunkard; but the unbelieving, and the proud, and the avaricious, may re-

main. The evidences of their unregeneracy may not be apparent, or if apparent, the proofs cannot be brought to bear, and thus they live on in the church, long after they have ceased to live for God. But the day of scrutiny and separation is coming. The fires of the last day will search through the church, and while the gold and silver, &c., will only be refined, "hay and wood, and stubble," will be destroyed.

1. The Savior tells us that this discrimination shall be made *at the end of the world*. Sometimes it is made on this side of death, but surely *then*. Let us pass in the swift transition of our thoughts to that eventful day. I am not concerned to inquire after its physical grandeur, but, oh ! it will have moral interests to adjust, and there will be transactions so momentous that the ears of every one in the universe that heareth them shall tingle.

(a) Where is the *hypocrite* now. In the grave he has left his mask and stands in native ugliness.

(b) Where now is the formalist, alas ! the illusion of his false hope has vanished, and he awakens to the terrible conviction that he has no hope.

(c) The poor backslider now remembers how he cast away his confidence, how through unfaithfulness he alienated his Savior, and put the interests of his soul in fearful peril. All who have held a lie in their right

hand, all who have held the truth in unrighteousness, all who having a name to live, and yet been dead, shall be assigned to their dread places on the *left* hand of the Judge, and hypocrites and unbelievers together, shall reap their harvest of vindictive fire.

2. The angels shall sever the wicked from among the just, and in so doing the line of separation will be drawn between families and neighborhoods and churches. Parents will bid an everlasting farewell to their children, husbands and wives will be separated, old neighbors will look at each other for the last time, and ministers and members see some of their numbers for the last time, as they recede towards the thick darkness where they are to spend their eternity in weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. No sanctimonious professions, no earnest protestations, no repentant tears can now avail, but they must obey their fearful sentence, "depart," a sentence never to be revoked, followed by a ruin never to be relieved. *Hands* which have been clasped in prayer in earthly temples, will be wrung in despair while the billows of everlasting death dash over them. *Brows* which have been sprinkled with baptismal dew, will burn with ceaseless baptisms of fire. *Eyes* which once wept tears of penitence, will shed streams of woe. *Lips* which have tasted the symbols of a Savior's broken body and shed blood, will utter everlasting

imprecations. *Hearts* which once throbbed with hope, will be filled with despair forever. The separation will be complete and eternal. "If the righteous are scarcely saved," &c.

SERMON XXVI.

THE LABORERS.

Matt. xx : 1-16.—The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard, &c.

A reference to eastern customs sheds light on many portions of the word of God. One of their customs was for persons seeking employment to go into the market places and those needing workmen to seek them here.

Imagine some Jewish householder to need many laborers as the hurrying season of the year came on, and he goes to the nearest village and enters the market place, makes his selections and bargains and despatches them to his fields. Others continue to arrive during the day and all on their coming are offered employment and wages, and many of them enter his service.

Several different methods of exposition have been employed in relation to this parable.

1. Some have made the day to represent human life, and the different hours its various periods, and thus make the parable teach at whatever age an individual enters the service of God his reward will be the same at last. A bad use has been made of this exposition, even that of authorizing a postponement of the duties of life and the entrance upon the divine service by the assurance that repentance in old age or at death will ensure a reward as great as a life of piety. Surely the Savior did not intend to inculcate this sentiment. Surely he did not intend to encourage spiritual sloth and virtually warrant the postponement of the great work of life until life was almost gone.

2. A second exposition makes the parable refer to the various eras in man's moral history preceding the Savior's time. According to this view Abel and Enoch entered the vineyard at the first hour, Samuel and the prophets further on, while those converted under the ministry of John the Baptist came in at the eleventh hour. The objection to this is that the parable was to illustrate the kingdom of heaven.

3. We agree then with those who hold that the parable illustrates the times of entrance into the kingdom of Christ, and shows that those living further down the stream of time have equal advantages with

those who lived in the first dawns of the gospel, that the Jews who believed in Christ had no advantages over the Gentiles who subsequently believed, and that the last heathen who receives it from coasts where the gospel is not yet proclaimed will as surely be saved by it as we to whom it came earlier; in short, none shall be placed at a moral disadvantage on account of the age in which they lived.

But without spending more time here, we learn several valuable lessons.

I. The parable unfolds the actual condition of un-renewed men. They “stand *idle* in the market places.” Idleness would be excusable if

- (1.) There was nothing to do, or if
- (2.) We had no facilities or ability to labor,
- (3.) Or if no motives were furnished.

But neither condition is true.

1. The physical and moral condition of man is such that labor and effort are constantly demanded. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread” was the primal curse, and the Apostle declares that such as will not work ought not to eat. Physical idleness induces di-comfort and vice, mental inactivity is followed by ignorance and prejudice, while moral sloth perils the interests of the soul. Life is no mere holiday, but a scene of earnest and continued labor.

“Nothing to do” is the motto of indolence, but one

which can never be urged by those who will survey the magnitude of their responsibilities and the vastness of the interests which are at stake.

3. Equally fallacious is the plea that men have no faculties for labor.

(a) You have *time*, and time is a very precious boon given for this very end.

(b) You have *physical strength* to enable you to reach sinners and the sufferers of earth.

(c) You have *influence*, or power to shape the course of others.

(d) You have *means* which have been placed at your disposal for this very end.

(e) You can *pray* and thus enlist the energies of the Lord in your behalf.

And yet with all these faculties of labor men are idle. "Ye are idle," cried the Egyptian taskmasters, but the poor bondmen had none of the materials of labor in their hands. But when God accuses his servants of indolence it is amid the amplest facilities and the most abundant opportunities, and therefore, men are without excuse.

3. Nor can a paucity of *motives* be urged by way of extenuation. We blame not the slave for his languid toil in the absence of every motive. No benefit can accrue to himself from all his labors. But heaven and earth are full of motives urging us to dil-

igence in the great work of getting ready to die, and of rescuing our fellow men from the thralldom of sin, and from exposure to everlasting ruin, death and judgment.

II. We greatly wonder at this infatuation of sinners in regard to their eternal interests, but more do we marvel at the languid and dilatory manner in which many professors of religion work in the vineyard of the Lord.

1. There are in the Churches many men professedly called to the *sacred office*, and furnished with many requisites for usefulness who are standing idly in the ecclesiastical market places and when enquired of "why stand ye all the day idle?" are constrained to give the humiliating answer "because no man hath hired us." I love the system which remands every man to the vineyard, which assigns him *work, with or without wages*.

2. There are others who possess eminent qualifications as teachers in the Sabbath School, who are nevertheless passing idly away the day of life, their powers wasting, their faculties becoming impaired, and the vineyard which they should cultivate left to be overrun with briars and thorns.

3. Others are fitted for stations of usefulness in the official ranks of the Church who yet stand idle and like the nobles in Nehemiah's time.

4. Others point back to labors done and hardships endured in other years and claim exemption from labor now, because they entered the vineyard early and have borne the burden and the heat of the day.

III. But upon all, whether in the vineyards, or in the market places the obligation to labor is imperative and the burden of my entreaty is

1. To those in earth's market places to enter the vineyard of the Lord. You are now on the enemies' ground, just where the attractions of hell are strongest, just where the deadly snare is spread. From the market places of earth hell is mightily replenished, and remaining here you are as sure of being engulfed as is the navigator who is drawn within the charmed circles of the Norwegian maelstrom. Some have already heard and obeyed the summons to enter into the Lord's vineyard. *Some* entered in the first hour of morning, and with earnest and unceasing toil have been devoting a life to the service of God. *Others* entered as the sun of their being was ascending or culminating or declining, and I am glad that I may come to strong manhood and to bending age and invite each to labor in the vineyard of the Lord. I do not say that your reward will be the *same*, (the parable teaches no such sentiment, but exhibits the partially enlightened Jew clamoring after peculiar privileges,) but I promise that all who really enter the vineyard

and fathfully labor until the going down of the sun of life shall enter into the joy of their Lord. *All* will shine like the glowing firmament; but as stars spangle the firmament of night, so those who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the *stars* forever. But even "one star differeth from another in glory," so higher and brighter stations are reserved for such as enter the vineyard early and continue faithful unto death. Your happiness, your security, your salvation depend upon your abandonment of sin and the world and your devotion to the service of the Lord.

(1.) Do first, the work of *reflection*.

(2.) Do the work of repentance.

(3.) Let me exhort you to the exercise of faith in Christ.

2. But let no one feel that a bare entrance into the vineyard will meet the demands of the great proprietor. You are expected to labor diligently until the going down of the sun. "Be thou faithful unto death." "He that endureth to the end."

(1.) Aged pilgrim, bending on thy staff, toil on yet awhile. As the laborer in the harvest sees his shadow lengthen on the plain and knows that the sun is going down, wipes his sweating brow and bends to his toils anew, so do thou gather strength by remembering that thy life passeth away.

(2.) Young Christians, now is your time to work, and

now is the time to form your own character for all future time.

(3.) Children, you may at least glean a little, and gather out a few weeds and God will not let your humble labors go unnoticed or unrewarded. While then God has a right to us and our services, and can never come under obligation to us, he has yet promised great and magnificent rewards to his faithful servants.

1. Part of these are dispensed in time.

2. But the full measure is reserved to be shed on the soul through the uncounted ages of eternity. Each will receive all that he can in the Divine warrant claim, and many abundantly more. Every reward shall be great and all shall be eternal. Our toils will be over and the day of full perfect gladness and deliverance will come.

SERMON XXVII.

THE TWO SONS.

Matt. xxi : 28.—“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons,” &c.

Outward appearances and promises are often deceptive, and where the brightest hopes are cherished the most bitter disappointments often succeed.

To counterbalance this, results of a blessed character are often secured where not expected. While some prolific soil brings forth only a rank growth of weeds and briars, sterile fields do sometimes produce a goodly crop.

Had the inquiry been made, when Jesus was about to open His commission, who will be the *first* to receive the gospel, the answer would doubtless have been, “the Scribes and Pharisees.” They knew the law and were blameless as regards its righteousness, they were scrupulous as to its most minute observances, they were acquainted with the prophecies which proclaimed Messiah’s coming, and, possessed of all these advantages, it was a rational expectation that they would hail His advent and become His first and most devoted disciples.

Were it again inquired, who will most likely ignore the Redeemer's presence, scorn His warnings, and clamor for His blood? the answer would be "the publicans and sinners," the ignorant and the vicious of the land. And yet you know the remarkable fact that the former were His most bitter enemies; that they rejected, persecuted and crucified Him; while "the common people heard Him gladly," and the publicans and harlots became His auditors, disciples and worshipers.

So it would have seemed likely that the Jews, as a people, would gladly have welcomed Christ as their glorious prince, and that the Gentiles would promptly reject His religion as the latest phase of Jewish superstition; but the great mass of Jews, cried out we will not have this man to reign over us, and to this day the great body of that nation abjure Him, while the most precious harvests have been gathered from Gentile territory.

And who has not seen this same principle illustrated in the workings of religion in modern times? Zion travails, the church groans and weeps, and prays, "Oh, Lord! revive thy work," the indications increase that God is about to pour out His Holy Spirit, and eyes begin to look around to see where the expected shower will fall. And individuals are selected whom

the church regards as sure and speedy subjects of the work.

1. Among the objects of her hope and her prayers are the children of the church. These have been the subjects of great solicitude on the part of parents and friends. They have been the subjects of prayer and counsel long, and now all eyes are turned to see the evidences of their penitence and their turning to God. They have been familiar with the claims of God and the duties of religion ; they have been instructed in the Sunday School, and their knees have been taught to bow in prayer ; but, alas ! their hearts are obstinate now, and the revival passes by and many of them remain unsaved of the Lord.

2. There is another class, who, at such times, are the objects of great anxiety to the church. They are the amiable and virtuous classes in society. They have never formed the grosser habits of vice, they have never mingled in the society of the profane, nor joined in the songs of the drunkard. They never walked openly in the ways of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful. On the contrary, they have been thoughtful, distinguished for sobriety, integrity and veracity. They have been regarded as living just at the gate, and it has been supposed they had but to knock and enter into the kingdom of heaven.

3. Many of these have been regular attendants upon

and earnest listeners to the Gospel of Christ. They have freely given of their money to sustain the institutions of religion, their seat has rarely been vacant in the house of God, and now all suppose that those who have lingered at the pool so long will step in; that those who have lingered in the porch of the Gentiles for years will come into the porch of the worshipers. But alas for the calculations and hopes of the church; they remain like fixtures in their old positions. The gospel to them has been like moonbeams playing on icebergs.

4. And there is another class to whom God has come very near, against whom adversity has lifted its rod, and around whose door sickness has lingered. Death, too, has entered their dwellings and ravished their cherished ones from their sight, and hid them in the dark grave. They have friends in heaven, and while the cords that bound them to earth are loosening fast, their attractions heavenward are gaining strength. Oh! surely these smitten ones will flee to the Comforter! But they *do not* in every case, but turn their eye and their feet again to the world.

Thus the father said to his eldest son, the one who should be an example to the other, the one who had shared most largely in his father's counsels, who by right of primogeniture inherited his father's substance, "Go work in my vineyard." The reasonableness

of the command is admitted. The father had a right to command the son, (as God has to command us,) and he gave a ready reply, "I go, sir;" but when the day waned and his father sought him in the vineyard, no traces of his presence or his industry was found. "He went not." But the Church is not left to labor in vain or spend her strength for nought. She casts her bread upon the waters and after many days she finds it *when* and *where* she had not expected. She sows beside every stream, and somewhere the precious seed springs up and bears abundant fruit. In one direction, and perhaps in the most promising directions her hopes are cut off, but signs of promise arise in other quarters, showers come down from cloudless skies, and flowers spring up from desert soil.

Many a man when first approached on the subject of his salvation will meet you with rough and repellant words. But his very asperity may be caused by an arrow in his heart. When Moses besought his father to go with him to Canaan saying, "We are going to the land," &c., he was met with the rough reply, "I will not," &c., but there is some reason to think that he did retract and go after all. So the younger son with the petulance of a spoiled child, said, "I will not," yet the sequel was, he repented and went. You cannot judge of all that one *feels* by

what he *says*. At my last appointment during a season of revival a lady gave a sharp reply to an inquiry about her soul. That same lady asked pardon for her language, was converted, and soon after I saw Harriet laid in her grave. In every extensive revival, some of the most unlikely in the community are converted. Anciently the gospel saved a penitent thief. It saved Paul. From a swearing drunken rowdy, it made John Bunyan a prince in Israel, and a blessing to thousands. From a pirate and a slave-trader it made John Newton a profound Theologian, a wonderful writer and a giant in the pulpit. What triumphs the gospel secured in Corinth. 1 Cor. 6-7. In Wesley's time he was often beset by infuriated mobs, but his words often changed the lions into lambs, and those just ready to devour him became his body guard against all his enemies. The same Savior who tamed the demoniac of Gadara still lives, and is still all potent to subdue his enemies, and still good to forgive the chief of sinners. And this of course implies that he can save offenders, and while life remains prayer and effort may and should be employed for all.

1. We may learn from this subject the comparative inutility of good resolutions and promises never executed.

Of what use are *right views of duty*, if those views lead to no practical results?

Conviction itself is of no value, unless it lead to *conversion*; and multitudes resolve and re-resolve, then die the same. Dr. Johnson said long ago — what has so many times been said since — that “the way to hell is paved with good resolutions.” It will avail nothing to say “I go, sir”; if you do not *actually* “go,” your *admitted* duty will be neglected, and the vineyard of the Lord left uncultivated.

The great reason why so many resolutions are made which are never executed is, that men postpone the fulfillment of them to a future period. They throw every thing into the future, and the sad result is, that when the sun of their life goes down, it goes down in darkness and sorrow. Life is gone, but its great ends are defeated.

2. The second reflection which I deduce is, that we should never hastily regard any individual as helpless, and dismiss him from our solitudes and our prayers. Men may repel our approaches and despise our tears, but God may see incipient repentance in their hearts. We may say of many, as Annanias did of Saul, “we have heard of their persecuting nature, their bitterness against all that is good, and we cannot approach them”; but God may rebuke our timidity and unbelief by saying, “fear not, for *behold he prayeth.*” — Many, when asked to go into the Lord’s vineyard,

have answered, "I will not," but afterwards they have repented and gone.

The drunkard has reformed; the swearer became a man of prayer; the idler an active laborer for God.

Father! have you a graceless son? Your closing eye may witness his return. Sister! have you an obstinate brother? Baptize his steps with tears, and you may see him in the vineyard of the Lord.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

Matt. xxv. 1-13.—Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, &c."

The stand point from which this parable will find its true elucidation, is the last and great judgment day.

There can be no rational doubt but that the parable sweeps over the entire field of human probation, and reaches onward to the retributions of Eternity

The scenery was borrowed from the manner of celebrating marriages in the east, which was well understood by the hearers of Christ. These customs have undergone a little modification since that period. Travelers describe them as Christ represented them:—

1. By the *five wise virgins*, all agree are to be understood *true Christians*. Their wisdom was apparent in the fact that they took oil in their vessels with their lamps—evincing sagacious foresight, a wise regard to their future wants and welfare. The lamps are a religious profession. The oil represents the grace of God. These are each important—each may exist apart from the other—their highest utility is reached only in their union, while a profession, apart from grace, is of no more consequence than a lamp in thick darkness, with no oil to create a light.

2. By the *five foolish virgins*, some understand the *formalist* in religion, others regard them as typifying the *apostate*. That backsliders are intended, seems evident from the fact that they were called virgins, like the others, that is, so far as appears they *had* oil in their lamps, and that this had been exhausted.—Their folly is seen in the fact that they made provision only for the present. They were not far-reaching in their plans—they manifested indecision—they were not bold and persevering, but hesitating and vacillating in their course, and at last died, estranged from God.

3. The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ, so called from the intimate relation He sustains to the Church.

The marriage relation is a *Divine, intimate, permanent* relation — the source of highest happiness for man, and fitly points out the union between Christ and His people.

4. The next noticeable circumstance is that the "Bridegroom tarried" longer than the virgins expected.

And so our heavenly bridegroom has tarried in the heavens much longer than the church has anticipated. The early church expected him soon to appear. To correct this impression, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that the day was not at hand. So in every age, expectation of His coming has been cherished. We all remember how it has been in our times, and yet He tarrys, and the church waits, with lighted or extinguished tapers, for His coming.

5. It is said they slumbered and slept; or, rather, they became drowsy, and fell asleep.

This has been supposed to signify spiritual drowsiness; but this cannot be admitted: —

(1.) For *all* slumbered and slept.

(2.) None are *blamed* for it.

(3.) This would be the same thing as the lamps going out — making the parable tautological.

The sleep was the sleep of death, which *all* must sleep. This is the word frequently used to denote death.

Stephen "fell asleep." "I would not, &c., concerning them that are asleep." "Shall not prevent those that are asleep." "Asleep in Jesus, Oh, how sweet."

6. And then, after generations had rolled by and slept in the tomb, is heard a voice exclaiming, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out," &c.

(1.) This cry was made at midnight, the time the bridegroom usually came with torches gleaming in the darkness.

(2.) Christ may come when it is *literally* midnight in those places where the gospel has been more generally diffused. "At midnight when mankind," &c.

(3.) It may be moral midnight among the nations, as it was in the days of Noah and Lot; so when Christ shall be revealed. Death is always sudden, and the coming of Christ will be sudden. "As the lightning lighteneth, &c."

7. The virgins arose. This points out the resurrection scene. At the blast of the trumpet the graves shall open and all the generations of the dead come forth. The crisis now comes on. Both classes arise. The righteous dead arise and find their lamps replenished with grace. The foolish arise and find themselves with empty lamps. Their fatal deficiency is just discovered, but quite too late to be remedied. They turn to their acquaintances and ask for help, they cling to the saints but they can give them no re-

lief. They have no grace to spare, and can furnish none.

8. And then comes on the final separation, when the foolish and infatuated who have dreamed of heaven while walking in the way of death will awake to a full conception of their dreadful state, and with hopes shipwrecked, and heaven lost, they shall lie down in sorrow. While the banqueting halls shall be filled with joyful guests, and joy shall crown the marriage of the Lamb, the foolish virgins and slothful servants shall be excluded and remanded to outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

If this parable teaches anything, it teaches that an individual may labor under delusion all his life in reference to his religious state only to be undeceived on his entrance into the eternal world. "Ignorance in Pilgrim's Progress."

Thus do Formalism, and Hypocrisy, and Apostacy lead directly to hell, and not only so but they draw multitudes in their fearful wake to the same terrible result. Godless professors of religion neither enter heaven themselves, and those who would enter in they hinder. For lack of light their own feet stumble, and all who follow them will assuredly perish.

Can I close my subject better than by exhorting others as I exhort myself, to make sure work for eter-

nity. If you rest on an ancient experience, if you trust to a formal piety, if you make others the models and exemplars after which you copy, you may be leaning on a broken reed at best, oftentimes a spear on whose sharp point you may die. The living power of grace in the soul, regulating its affections, destroying its relish for worldly joys, and kindling a deep anxiety for the coming of the bridegroom, can alone ensure safety when the day of trial comes.

When Tigranes a prince of Armenia and his family were taken captives by Cyrus, and had been generously dismissed, all were lavish in their praises of the Persian monarch, but the wife of Tigranes was silent. When her opinion was asked, she replied I did not see him, but only him who offered his life for my ransom. Christians ! Christ has given his life for thee, and can you look upon the pleasures and honors of the world as desirable while he ceases to attract thee by his love and ravish thee by his glories ? And let every one understand that swift judgment shall overtake the Formalists soon and cut him assunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers.

SERMON XXIX.

THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT.

Matt. xxv : 30.—Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I wish to fix your thoughts upon the character of the servant upon whom this terrible sentence was pronounced—" *unprofitable*."

High-handed offenders are properly estimated, and their doom correctly anticipated ; but great allowance is made for the mere *delinquent*.

But all the admonitions of this chapter are pointed at this last class of individuals.

1. The five virgins condemned for *deficiency*.
2. The steward for *not improving*.
3. Those on the left hand for *not doing*.
- I. The ground of our accountability.

The obligation of the servant to obey arose from the fact that he *belonged* to his master. Ours rests in this : we, and all we have belong to God. The strength of my arm, the speed of my feet, my powers of body and mind. All my capabilities are of God. Upon nothing can I lay my hand and call it *mine*.

Men say they may do what they will with their

own. Choose their *occupation*, employ their time as they will. God, to be sure, *permits* us to use or abuse these talents at will. Herein lies our probation. But after a time the Lord of these servants will come and reckon with them.

II. With these premises it is easy to learn the *extent* of our accountability. Each servant was responsible for *all* the talents committed to him.

Talent is a general term, comprehending not only all we are, and all we have, but all we may attain, and all we may become. Bodily powers, mental accomplishments, influence, time, opportunities of usefulness, are all included.

EXCEPTIONS.

1. I am not to answer for original sin. That I was born depraved is my *misfortune*, and not my *fault*. No righteous tribunal will hold me to answer for the sin of my father.

2. For original mental deficiency. We are not all born with talents alike. Some five, some two, some one. As in the forest, some trees from the very laws of their nature are made to rear themselves on high and others to bow near the earth. So in the world of mind and influence.

3. For early disadvantages. My location and resources may have been unfriendly to success. The

avored sons of fortune have higher responsibilities than others.

Under these modifications, God has a right to require, and actually does require perfect obedience—the full conformity of all our powers to his will.

However His will is indicated, we have no path open to us but obedience. If I owe Him *anything* I owe *everything*. What part is exempt? If I *ever* owe it, I *always* owe it. Where is the limit of His claim?

And this responsibility is constantly *augmenting* through all the stages of natural and spiritual life. It is greater on a man than on a child, greater on a mature Christian, than on a babe in Christ. The child reads his Bible, attends Sunday School, hears preaching, is a subject of gracious influence, and at each step a new grasp is on him. He may strive, but he is powerless to *evade* his responsibilities. He may bury his talent, but he cannot destroy his accountability.

So also our *expanding* *graces* impose upon us new obligations. And not only where an advanced piety is attained, but where it might have been secured by the best use of all the facilities at our disposal. We are responsible for all we might have been, if we had been diligent and faithful as we might have been and ought to have been. Here is one mighty to do good. He is under obligation to do it. Another is powerless,

his duty is the same. One acquires new graces ; these in turn become *talents* to be used. Another with equal facilities fails to secure them. But for their use (though he has them not) God holds him responsible. Thus want of talent may be guilt, and the ground of our condemnation.

Take the case of two twin brothers. One (while a babe) goes to Sabbath School. Becomes a teacher, a preacher, a Howard. He goes a missionary to the ends of the earth. Does he do *more than he ought to do* ? Had he done *less* would he not have been guilty and condemned ? The other takes an opposite course. In childhood a truant, in youth profligate and disobedient, in manhood a moral pestilence, cursing the world with infidel sentiments and a pernicious example. Great in intellect only to be great in iniquity. Shall he be judged by another law ? If so *how* did he win the boon ? How gain exemption from responsibility ? By his first, his tenth, or his ten thousandth sin ? He ought to have been a missionary too.

Oh ! says one if I were a Christian I would set one example of Christian attainment, and give one illustration of Christian life. Well, I will not apologize for the defective experience or life of any. But you ought to be a Christian. It is your sin that you are not a Christian.

If I were a Christian I would be a man of prayer,

of benevolence, &c. You ought to be now. You may do nothing I may not do, omit nothing I may not omit. Your responsibility will cleave to you like a part of your being. You may build a Babel to heaven, but you cannot climb from it. You may dig a pit as deep as hell but you cannot bury your obligations. They will have a resurrection some day. Is this hard? Is God's law too rigorous? Hard as it is it is God's law. Your complainings will not soften its rigor.

So thought the unprofitable servant. "Lord! thou art a hard master"; and I have brought thy talent take it and be satisfied. But was the plea valid? Let us see. "Thou *knewest* that I was a hard master?" "You knew it did you?" "Thou oughtest *therefore*, to have put my money to use." Have you come to insult me now? "Take the unprofitable servant."

Let us apply this subject --

(1.) To the Christian: Are you employing *all* your talents for the glory of God? Have you all the talents you might have had? Have you not dwarfed your powers and fallen behind in the race of holiness?

(2.) To the sinner: Your condition is terribly alarming! You fancy all is well, but it is only the obtuseness of your moral perceptions which induces the fearful delusion. While you sleep, the tempest is abroad in its rage. While you congratulate yourself that all

may end well, you are *treasuring up wrath* against the day of wrath.

(3.) To the young: You alone can give to God His own, with due improvement. With us that day has gone by. We can never return to palmy youth and do what we have failed to do. Children of the Sabbath school, begin. Would it not be a noble resolve? And then, when the drama of time shall close, the Master shall say, "Inasmuch as ye have been faithful," &c.

SERMON XXX.

THE VINEYARD AND HUSBANDMEN.

Mark xii : 1-12.—"A certain man planted a vineyard," &c.

In this parable we are taught the great privileges and great wickedness of the Jewish people. By asserting this parabolically, He secured a hearing, whereas He would have been interrupted had He said these things plainly and directly. The purport of the parable was not seen until it closed. In opening the parable, we take up the characters and statements *as they are laid down*.

1. The *man* represents *God*. In Matthew, he is called a *householder*, or a master of a family, and God

is the head of all the families of the earth, especially of the Jews.

2. Of this man it is said that he planted a vineyard. A vineyard is a plantation of vines which produces grapes from which *wine* is made. These require great labor in preparing the ground, cultivating the grapes, &c., and by this figure God represents the pains He took for the good of the Jewish people. In the Old Testament, the same figure is frequently used—Psalm lxxx : 8.

Three of the Evangelists record this parable, and they all state that it awakened the wrath of the Jews, “for they perceived that he had spoken it against them.” And how true the parable in its application to the Jews. Look at the exodus from Egypt, their passage of the Red Sea, their sustenance in the wilderness, the dividing of Jordan, the conquest of their enemies. Look at their spiritual benefits, the giving of the law at Sinai, the instruction provided, the Sabbaths appointed, the sanctuaries erected, the prophets sent. All this is pointed out by the building of a hedge, the digging a place for the wine fat, the erection of a tower, &c. What more saith God, “could I have done,” &c.

3. The next circumstance is the sending of the servants to receive the fruit of the vineyard. This the proprietor had a right to expect. It was *his* vineyard,

they were only tenants, and a proportion of the produce belonged to the owner of the vineyard. This points out the messengers whom God sent to the Jews to instruct, reprove, and warn them. There were only brief periods when no prophet's voice was heard sounding through Zion. Moses and Joshua, and the judges, and Samuel and the earlier kings, were not only magistrates, but religious teachers. The prophets, John, and Christ, were exclusively so.

4. The treatment which these messengers received is next narrated. This was most shameful. They were beaten, stoned, slain. How true of the messengers sent to the Jews. Moses says of his people, "they be almost ready to stone me." They often rebelled, and but for the fact that God was so manifestly with him, they would have followed the example of Korah, &c., and made them a captain and returned to Egypt. They stoned Jeremiah, Isaiah was sawn asunder, Ezekiel was imprisoned and Zecharias slain. "Which of the prophets have not," &c? "Take my brethren the prophets," &c. *John* was beheaded, *Jesus* crucified. This filled up their cup.

5. The retribution inflicted. Matthew says that Jesus asked the Jews what under these circumstances the husbandman ought to do? And they not remembering that they were passing sentence on themselves, answered, He will miserably destroy those murderers.

As David had said "the man who hath done this shall die," and thus pronounced his own death warrant, so did they indicate what was their fit doom. And this doom was inflicted upon this people in less than forty years, or before the generation had entirely passed away.

Never did a people under the sun endure such sufferings as did those Jews. They were pent up in Jerusalem where they had come to the feast of unleavened bread, and were shut in by the Roman army and all their supplies cut off. They obstinately refused to surrender, strangely expecting help from the Lord. Famine rioted in the streets. Intestine war kept up horrid carnivals in the city, while foreign legions thundered at their gates. 1,100,000 perished in the siege, and every stream of Judea ran blood, and the remnant were sold as slaves to Egypt, and carried in triumph to Rome.

Thus were the Jewish husbandmen visited with a terrible retribution. And now for 18 centuries, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles. The Romans held it for a time, then the Saracens became its masters, and (save a brief period when it was held by the Crusaders) it has been for ages a part of the Turkish empire. The spot where the temple stood is occupied by a Mahomedan mosque, from the minarets of which a Muzzin daily cries "there is no God," &c.

But the Jews where are they? They are given like leaves to the gales, and are scattered in every land.

1. I come now to apply this parable to our own times and to our own land. Who cannot trace a striking parallel between the history of the Jews and of our own nation. The psalmist declares "God hath not dealt so with any nation," and Moses inquires, "when hath God taken a nation out of another nation by signs, by wonders, and by war, as He hath done by you?" All this He has done for us. His providence had to do with the *time* of its discovery. It guided the May Flower across the trackless waters. It directed the sword of Washington. Our country stretches across the continent and sweeps from the frozen North to the tropic climes and contains all the elements of a great empire.

We have educational appliances, we have an unfettered press, freedom of speech, and freedom to worship God. All that could be done to build up a great and virtuous republic, has been done for us by God. If ever we fall, it will be the judgment of God upon us for our wickedness. See how identical were the sins of the Jews to those of our people and our own age.

(1.) "Because of swearing, the land," &c.; and the voice of profanity is heard all over our land.

(2.) “Wo to the drunkards of Ephraim ;” and drunkenness revels in our streets.

(3.) “Because ye have not proclaimed liberty, every man to his brother ;” and the wailing of millions is heard.

(4.) “Ye have profaned my Sabbaths ;” and lightly do we esteem them. To us, indeed, might God say as to that people, “By lying and swearing, and stealing,” &c. For these things the wrath of God is in danger of being poured out, and it becomes us to proclaim a fast like the Ninevites, and pray for pardon.

2. Apply the subject *ecclesiastically*. The Jewish people were a covenant people. Their government was a theocracy, with them church and state were identical. But, for their backslidings Zion was covered with a cloud in the day of the Lord’s anger, and the beauty of Israel was cast down to the ground.

And how has the pall of desolation been hung over the Christian Church. When kings became her supports, when she began to covet human glory, then was the Church shorn of her strength, and the judgments of heaven rested on the unfaithful husbandmen. And let any particular branch of that Church forget her calling, become proud and formal, and conformed to the world, and fail to bring forth the fruits of holiness and usefulness, and just as true as the

principles of God's government are unchanged, that Church will be supplanted. God will take away the name and memorial of that Church and give the keeping of His vineyard to more faithful husbandmen. Though she may count her membership by millions, and multiply her altars and her temples like the sand of the sea, yet if God be not in her, she shall be utterly overthrown.

3. Finally, let the subject have an *individual* application. States and churches are made up of individuals, and what is true of masses is true of the atoms composing them. You have each been the objects of Divine attention and love. God's spirit created you. His Son died for you. All your life He has followed you with mercies, and let me assure you that every one of those mercies will turn to swift judgments if they are rejected. "You only have I known saith the Lord, *therefore*, will I punish you for all your sins." "But they grieved his holy spirit, *therefore*, he turned and became their enemy." But you say that *you* have not imitated the conduct of these husbandmen. Let us see.

1. They withheld the fruit. Have not you done this? Have you rendered to God your hearts? your services?

2. They ill-treated the messengers. You say "*I* have not done this." Let us see. Is it treating them

well when you refuse to hear their words? Is it treating them well to disregard their counsel, to grieve them by delinquency and apostacy?

3. Bear with me while I add that you have had to do with the crowning guilt of the world, the death of the son of God. "You have been the betrayers and murderers." If all the blood of the martyrs came upon the generation to whom Christ spake, who shall say that the guilt of his murderers has not been adopted and re-enacted by the men of this generation.

"Yes! thy sins have done the deed,
Driven the nails that fixed Him there,
Crowned with thorns His sacred head,
Plunged into his side the spear.

Wilt thou let Him bleed in vain;
Still to death thy Lord pursue,
Open all his wounds again,
And the shameful cross renew?
No! with all my sins I'll part,
Savior take my broken heart."

SERMON XXXI.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

Luke xiii: 6-9.—“A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none,” &c.

The occasion of this parable was the relation to Christ by the Jews, of Pilate's slaughter. In general it applies to the Jews. They had been especially cared for by God. But continued barrenness wrought their ruin. The Jewish fig tree long pruned, cultivated and borne with, at last was cut down, and its scattered leaves are now floating in every land. There are several interesting views to be taken of this parable, a parable which we cannot but feel is appropriate to us and especially at the present season of the year.

I. Observe the favorable condition of the fig tree for productiveness. It was not by the way-side nor left uncared for, but in a vineyard under the care and culture of wine-dressers. God selected Israel from among the nations, gave them their laws, the prophets, and spread over them His shield. But more, far more, has He done for us. We have the crowning benefit of Messiah's death. We have his bright example.

We live under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. The requirements of God take higher range. Now He commandeth all men to repent. Mark His gracious dealing with us as a nation—as a church.

II. Under these circumstances it was to be expected that the proprietor should expect the fig tree to be fruitful. Let us inquire *what fruits* God requires us to produce.

1. Fruits of repentance. This is a result of right views of God and our relations to Him “I have seen God, therefore I repent.” Impenitence ranks high in God’s scale of crimes. It *repeats* and *re-acts* every other sin, and until its heinousness is seen, it tinges every other moral act and makes all partake of its vileness. A minister was once asked why he preached so much on repentance. Repent! repent! comes sounding all along the sacred pages.

2. He expects us to produce all the fruits of holiness. This is more than negative. Many will properly estimate flagitious offenders, while he who simply neglects God and avoids great crimes is looked upon with lenient and tolerant views. But let us take the Bible view of our obligations to God. His claims cover all our time and all our talents. What part of either is exempt from this claim. These are constantly augmenting as the mind expands. At every step a new grasp is on him. Our struggles to evade

are ineffectual. So also our expanding graces place us in new relations and impose upon us new obligations. Every acquired grace becomes an additional endowment for which we are responsible.

God holds us responsible for all we might have been. Take the case of two brothers ; one becomes greatly good and greatly useful, the other evil and demoralizing. Will they be judged by different laws ? "If I were a christian I would set such an example." But God requires this of *you*. For what was the fig tree doomed. The foolish virgins excluded. The unprofitable servant condemned ? And their claims are not arbitrary, but just. Who gave you your power ? Whose hand is over you ?

III. But observe now the disappointment of the proprietor. No fruit. There may be a goodly trunk and spreading branches, but there is *no fruit*. Oh, how true of myriads who live under the gospel dispensation. How true of many professors in the Church. The fruits of holiness will be sought after in vain. Let an angel come down at the hour of prayer and inquire, is Jesus here ? Some must say no, he *was here* but not *now*. Some, we hope He *will be*, but He *is not now*. So ministers are disappointed. So *they* will be at the last.

IV. And then the command of the proprietor went forth, "cut it down."

I. This was not hasty. "Three years." How did He bear with the Jews? How has He borne with us? He has tempered his judgment. He might have cut us down in our sins. He might have launched His thunder against us while we were secure. Intimations of coming judgments have been seen. Ever and anon the ground has opened and a familiar form has disappeared. But we live on. And yet "the axe may be laid at the root of the tree, for every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit," &c.

2. For this sentence a sufficient reason is assigned, "Why cumbereth it the ground." A dead tree is not only useless, but is actually unsightly and cumbersome. A Formalist in the Church cumbers the vineyard of the Lord. "He enters not in himself," &c.

V. But at this crisis an intercessor appears and pleads for a short respite. He vindicates the sentence in its justice, but prays to have the execution postponed. Spare it for *one* year, one round of the seasons; one year's sun and rain. But his pleading is accompanied with the assurance that if it then bears no fruit it shall be cut down.

This pleading of our advocate in heaven, and of pious friends on earth has procured the lengthening out of our lives, and we see another year die. We are here to bury the passing and to hail the incoming year. Full brightly it will dawn on many a happy

heart that will cease to throb e'er its round of seasons is run.

Youth, the first season, is gone. With buoyant hopes we have entered the second or third year. Justice may have cried cut it down, but the voice of mercy has hitherto prevailed. Now how shall we employ the moment of respite? It is a moment of awful interest. The case stands thus.

1. If it bear fruit—*well*. Brief but expressive word. Well for the tree and the vineyard. Well for the fruit-bearing Christian—well in time, in death, in eternity. Well for him when from city full, and desert wide, God's ransomed saints shall come and hear the joyful word, "Servants of God, well done."

2. If not, cut it down. Your intercessor will become your judge. Mercy will plead no more. And as sure as the year will close, so sure the threatening will be verified. That awful day will surely come.

1. Let the subject lead to serious self-examination. Am I in the vineyard of the Lord a fruitful tree, or am I a cumberer of the ground.

2. Let the Formalist be awakened to a deep concern for his soul's salvation.

3. Let all remember, the great end of life is to glorify God and obtain final salvation.

If thou art here a fruitful tree in the Lord's vineyard, after bringing forth a few harvests more, you

shall wave your boughs on heaven's sun-lit hills and drink life-giving dews, and be fruitful in holiness and happiness forever.

SERMON XXXII.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke xv : 11-32.—A certain man had two sons, &c.

Among all the parables of our blessed Lord there is none more tender and impressive than that of the Prodigal Son.

The great design of the parable is to illustrate the solicitude of our Heavenly Father towards His wayward and wandering children, and the joy with which we He welcomes their return. The two sons in the parable doubtless indicate the two great branches of the human family, the Jews and the Gentiles, and the petulancy of the elder, at the warm reception of the prodigal indicates the envy of the Jews at the salvation of the Gentiles.

I fancy now that I look in upon the home of a Jewish patriarch, who has, perhaps, buried the mother of his children, but who has supposed that while passing down the vale of years he could confidently lean on the shoulders of his two noble sons. His house may

have been in one of the secluded valleys of Judea, and, occupied with home joys and rural occupations, he knew little of and cared little for the great world around him. But the younger and favorite son had heard of the outside world, and like many a spoiled child, he became restless under parental restraints and set up a presumptuous claim to be invested with his portion of his father's wealth and to be permitted to go out and seek his fortune in the wide wide world. You know the fearful issue. His substance wasted like the frost, harpies and harlots made him their victims, and at last we see him with his patrimony squandered, his health undermined, his character in ruins, subjected to the most menial employments, thrown into the most degrading associations, starvation staring him in the face, friends alienated, and all his fair prospects blasted forever. Before noticing his return to his home and his father, we will attend to the exposition of this part of the parable.

Man once dwelt in Eden, happy in himself, in harmony with the universe, high in favor with God. But he wandered from his Eden home, alienated himself from God and plunged into the lowest depths of misery and ruin. And during all these rolling centuries man has been following in the fearful wake of his ancestors, choosing banishment from God, and

all the misery attendant upon and all the ruin following a life of sin.

Did the prodigal go into a far country? Oh! *how far* you have wandered from God, not physically, for He is always near you, but morally; the distance is immeasurable, as far as hell from heaven.

Did he waste his substance? So the sinner has forfeited the knowledge of God, and joined himself to his rivals and his enemies; he has forfeited happiness, and with guilt on his conscience and remorse in his heart, he looks forward to the retributions of another life where in a fixed state of sorrow and despair he must dwell forever.

From this state of guilt and misery it is evident the return must be a matter of some difficulty. The Prodigal could not go to sleep and awake at home in his father's arms and house, but there were preliminary stages of desire, resolution and effort, before that glad result was attained.

And no sinner ever *happened* to get converted, or found religion *by accident*. The facts of conviction and conversion are too momentous, taking too deep a hold upon the feelings, requiring too important sacrifices, to transpire without the knowledge and highest efforts of one seeking and attaining salvation.

The return of the prodigal was preceded by reason resuming her throne. "He came to himself." Re-

ligion is a reasonable system, and it addresses itself to man's rational nature. "Come, let us *reason* together" is the affectionate exhortation of the Lord. But man is strangely demented, "he is *mad* upon his idols," insanely wedded to his sins. He magnifies the trivial interests of time but neglects the momentous concerns of his immortal soul. But reflection and consideration came to the prodigal's rescue, so must the sinner "come to himself." Consideration is the harbinger of repentance and salvation.

The second step in the reformation of the prodigal was the resolution which he formed to arise and go to his father's house. He had no reason to expect a gracious reception, his conduct had been so unfilial, and his whole career had been so reckless that he only dared to seek a servant's place, and was by no means certain that he should not be sternly remanded from the presence of that father, whose goodness he had so abused. But if to go *back* was probable rejection, to *remain* was *certain* death. Like Queen Esther he resolved to go, and like her he said "If I perish I perish."

And need I say that no sinner will seek and find the Lord who does not first *resolve* on this. You can do NOTHING until the resolution to do, or attempt it, has been formed and fixed in the mind. This resolution must not be vague but definite, not hampered

with conditions, but fully formed ; not formed in our own strength, but in the strength of the Lord ; not to be executed sometime in the indefinite future, but to be put into prompt, immediate execution.

And now the prodigal youth after long years of waywardness, and after descending deeply into the depths of misery, after considering his wretchedness, and deliberately taking his purpose, sets out on his return. No doubt he had difficulties to overcome, but the emergencies were great, everything was at issue, and with firm purpose he set his face toward his father's house and went forward. He not only *started*, but he persevered, and though fear and shame and pride stood in his path, yet *on* he went until he came to the brow of the hill that overlooked his native valley.

Time had wrought its changes since the prodigal departed. It had written the cheeks of the old man over with wrinkles, it had whitened his locks, and shaken him rudely by the hand. I have fancied that on this morning he had gone forth from his mansion leaning on his staff, and thinking on his long lost son. His locks sway in the breeze, his step is feeble, and his bosoms heaves long deep sighs as he exclaims, " oh ! my son, my son, my Benjamin, my Absalom, wilt thou never gladden my old eyes again, shall I go

down to my grave mourning and see thee no more forever ?”

But who is this approaching ? A young man he seems, and yet the marks of premature age are on him. His countenance gives evidence of deep sorrow and apprehension. His clothes are tattered and filthy, his hair is disheveled, his beard, the pride of the Hebrew youth is matted, and his whole appearance is that of utter wretchedness. And yet in this wretched wanderer, the intuitions of parental love discern some traces of that one so long mourned over as one dead. The old man gazes with intense scrutiny, belief rises unto certainty ; and with the joyful cry “ it is, it is my son—he runs to salute him and embrace him. And then the richest attire of the wardrobe was brought, and the fatted calf was killed, and the viol’s voice awoke the joyous pulses, and there was joy in the house of the Jewish Patriarch because the dead was alive and the lost was found.

And oh ! how many times has this scene been re-enacted, as the Great Father of all, has looked out on his returning children, who tremblingly and penitently have come to him exclaiming, “ I have sinned,” &c., &c. All the wealth of his love has been shed upon them, and notes of joy have sounded in all the courts of Zion.

The Prodigal Son came with words of *confession* on his lips, "Father, I have sinned, sinned against heaven," is his language. "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy."

He came *praying*, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," take me into thy favor, even if the lowest place be assigned me. And God has declared that "every one that calleth upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." Oh ! penitent one ! burdened with guilt and bowed down with sorrow, "Come to the mercy-seat, pensively kneel. Your Father will meet you while yet you are afar off."

And did the return of the son make the old family mansion resound with songs and rejoicing ? So the Savior has twice told us in this chapter that there is joy in heaven among the angels when a sinner repenteth. The man who found his stray sheep on the mountains, and the woman who found her lost piece of silver rejoiced more over those than over all their secure treasures, and doubtless the return of one sinner is occasion of higher joy in heaven, than the steadfastness of unfallen multitudes. I assure you my friends there is not one of you, not even the humblest and most unworthy, whose repentance would not send a thrill of delight through all the high orders of beings in heaven. And now the momentous inquiry returns,

if God is so deeply concerned for the sinner, if angels so earnestly desire to see him saved, if the Church in heaven and on earth sympathize in this solicitude, how can the sinner himself remain unconcerned? You know the emotions of your Father's heart. You know the tenderness of His love, and you know that remaining away from Him, you will miserably perish. God help you to choose the good part which can never be taken from you.

SERMON XXXIII.

RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

Luke xvi: 19 — 31.— “There was a certain rich man,” &c.

If the parable of the Prodigal Son is the most *affecting*, that of the rich man and Lazarus is the most *awful* of the Savior's parables. In the one he exhibits the greatness of the love of God to sinners, and urges this motive to repentance; in the other he holds up the tremendous retributions of another life, to warn men to flee the wrath to come.

By introducing *two* characters upon the stage, Jesus avails himself of the helps which *contrast* furnishes — a contrast which is begun in time, and which extends

into Eternity. So natural, so life-like, are the characters, so minute the circumstances, that many have regarded this as a narrative of facts, rather than as a parable. In either case, the same momentous truths are taught. The principal characters introduced are well-known. The *name* of the rich man is not given, while that of Lazarus is as familiar as a household word. This may be an illustration of the Scriptural assertion, that the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance, while the name of the wicked shall rot.

The moral character of the two men must be inferred from the destiny to which they passed ; for it does not appear in the record of their lives. The only clue we have to this, is the apparent voluptuousness and hard-heartedness of the rich man. The former characteristic is inferred from his attire and his table. Purple was the peculiar attire of kings and grandees, and "fine linen" was produced among the orientals, so valuable that it was sold for its weight in the finest gold. While his *person* was thus adorned, his *table* was daily replenished with the most costly and delicious viands, and every desire which wealth could meet was promptly satisfied. But the circumstance which fixes the deepest obloquy upon his character, is that a beggar starved and rotted and died at his gate, without awakening especial concern in *his* bosom. Com-

pletely absorbed in self, how should *he* know, or why should *he* care what others suffered. "Every man for himself" was *his* motto. And yet it is possible that this man laid to his soul the flattering unction that he *was* benevolent. His fame may have gone abroad as a man of wealth and charity, and *hence* the beggar may have been laid at his gate. And perhaps he was *in a way* sheltered and *fed*; and Dives may have passed as a very respectable gentleman, well to do in the world; and, as the world goes, as good as his neighbors, and hoping all would be well at last. The Savior does not exhibit him as a monster of vice, but simply as a man of the world.

On the other hand, we only infer the moral excellence of the beggar from the distinguished honors he received from angels, and from the high seat he reached in heaven. Poverty is no evidence of virtue — wealth no certain proof of vice. The man who gave Jesus an honorable burial was a rich man, and those who persecuted His most illustrious Apostle were "lewd fellows of the baser sort." Outward circumstances are no evidence of one's character. Wealth and poverty are mere accidents in man. Both are evil — neither necessarily sinful. Nero on the throne, Paul in the dungeon, is often seen.

The contrast relates especially to their earthly condition. One was rich, the other very poor. One had

an opulent home, the other no home at all. One had gorgeous attire, the other rags. One had sumptuous fare, the other fed on precarious crumbs. One was petted by the great, the other was pitied by the dogs.

But time rolls on, the scene changes :

1st. The beggar dies, was relieved of wretchedness, thought the Pharisee; annihilated, said the Sadducee; borne by angels to heaven, say the Scriptures. He leaves his wearisome body in the grave, and his soul ascends to its celestial seat in the kingdom of heaven.

The rich man also died, as all must die at last; and now the contrast really begins. His body, of course, was duly honored with a lordly burial, but the soul went to hell. Men sometimes object to the use of this awful word in the pulpit—we leave them to adjust the question with the Son of God. He was in misery, so Jesus said; “being in torment” so himself said — “being tormented in the flame.” The elements of his misery were —

1. An accusing conscience;
2. Awful memories;
3. Deprivation of former comforts;
4. Unsatisfied desires;
5. Direct inflictions of wrath;
6. Contrast with heaven and despair.

Without tracing the history further, we turn our thoughts to some of the great truths which are here brought out by our blessed Lord :

1. I notice the fact that human condition, as regards wealth and poverty, affords no criterion by which to judge of character. Wealth may contribute to personal piety and usefulness ; or it may clog the soul and wed it to the dust ; it may hasten the triumphs of the Gospel, or secularize the spirit, and sink it in destruction and perdition. So in poverty, precious graces may be developed, resignation, and patience and faith ; or petulency, discontent and fretfulness against the Lord.

Are you rich ? Use well the trust committed to you. Remember that this is no proof of God's favorable regard ; remember that it will not fence off death, nor procure acceptance for the Lord.

Are you poor ? Providentially so, and not as the result of indolence, imprudence or intemperance ? Be resigned to your humble lot ; you have not to answer for what has been denied you. Your poverty will not alienate the affections of Jesus ; for you the brotherly angels may come down, and in the day of your death may bear you on their strong wings to glory.

2. Again I learn that truth every where taught in the New Testament, but everywhere forgotten in this insane world, that there is a future life. I learn that,

"beyond this vale of tears," &c. To that bright world Abraham arose, thither Lazarus soared, and there all the spiritual seed of Abraham will dwell forever. But I also learn that "there is a death whose pang," &c. For long ages the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah have been suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, there the rich man still lifts his eyes in torment, and there all who die in their sins will spend a miserable eternity.

3. I learn that the retributions of that futurity commence at death. This is a tremendous thought, "*Soon as from earth I go.*" Some have strangely supposed that there was no conscious existence between death and the resurrection. Others have supposed that souls have an allotment and locality before the judgment different from what they will have afterward. Both of these ideas are rebuked by this parable. A saint dies and he goes to heaven. In a moment he is amid the radiant armies before the throne. A wicked man dieth and in that very day all his hopes perish. There will, of course, be a judgment day, but the object will not be to examine witnesses, array proofs, and reach conclusions, but to certify to the universe the fidelity of God to His engagements, to exhibit the justice which condemns the wicked and the grace which saves the righteous. There will be a judgment day, and Dives will come up from the fiery

pool and meet and possess again that old body, raised and made immortal, thus both death and hell delivering up their dead, and when the final word is uttered he shall again be cast into the lake of fire. Lazarus will be there, his spirit etherealized by its long abode in heaven, and his old diseased body resplendent now as the flashing diamond.

4. The judgment passed, all will enter upon their joyful or dreadful allotments, and those allotments will be everlasting. This is the most tremendous truth I have yet announced, the most momentous man ever heard. None question that the joys of the righteous will be eternal. But men have dared, in defiance of all that God has said, to teach, and build houses to teach it in, that hell will be only for a time, that the gulf will be bridged, and all the lost escape. They tell us that the terms "everlasting" and "eternal" are sometimes applied to things which have an end. We answer, when this is so the *things themselves* are limited in their duration, but the eternal God and the immortal soul are not among the things to perish. But is there to be a more willing Savior, a more attractive cross, a more precious Gospel, more pungent appeals in hell than in time? Who is deputed to proclaim *such* a Gospel? I dare not promise the sinner emancipation from hell, nor even alleviation there, no not so much as a drop of water would give. Better

steer clear of those dark coasts and give no heed to the lullaby, "ye shall not surely die."

Personal mercies being denied, this wretched spirit asks that a special messenger may be sent to warn his five brethren, not that he had a benevolent regard for their welfare, nor an earnest desire for the glory of God in their salvation, but he knew that their coming would enhance his own misery. One, a Sadducee scouting futurity. One, a Pharisee trusting to forms. One, a drunkard ruined at his table. One, rich, inheriting his wealth. One, a child whose character and course are not determined. Oh! he dreads their reproaches!! Be careful of the influence you exert, of words, example, writings which may sink others to ruin.

Finally, I learn the all sufficiency of the Bible for instruction in the way of righteousness. The rich man insinuates that a further message would avail, and now men tell us that spirits come back to supply the lack of light imparted by Moses, &c., &c. To all such demands we reply, "to the law and the testimony," "if they believe not Moses," &c. Such an apparition might startle and overwhelm us, but it would form no firm basis for faith to fall back upon. It could not command the faith of another at all, nor my own only for the moment. But *here* is everlasting

Rock. Believing and obeying it I shall share the bliss of Abraham and Lazarus,—denying or disobeying it I shall dwell forever with the rich man in hell.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SERMON XXXIV.

CONSCIENCE.

Acts xxiv : 16.—And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man.

By conscience, I mean that faculty by which we make moral distinctions, and which when properly educated, discerns good from evil.

That men have such a faculty is evident from the fact they do make such distinctions. Men see, hear and taste, hence we infer that they have a *faculty* for so doing.

Men see a difference between right and wrong, hence we argue that they have a faculty to do so; and this faculty we call *conscience*.

A defective, untrained conscience does not imply the absence of sense, only its imperfections.—True, the Scriptures speak of an evil, hardened,

seared, conscience. And we see instances where the conscience seems to be torpid and perverted, where men put light for darkness, and good for evil

This very apostle said he had lived in all good conscience &c. Hence, we may learn that the conscience is not an unerring rule of duty ; but only an educated, rectified, and enlightened conscience. It is a matter of common observation that *up to a certain point*, conscience is the antagonist of vice, a guardian sentinel at the heart to scrutinize all its motions ; but that *beyond that point* it ceases to warn, to smite and to frown.

The pirate Gibbs, who had shed the blood of four hundred persons, declared that his conscience never troubled him, save in one instance. He had smothered its voice, and amid the tempest of stormy passions and fiercer encounters, its monitions were unheard and disregarded. Conscience can be trained so as to be an unerring index of right, or it can be seduced to act a treacherous part against God and your own soul. If regulated by revelation and religion, if its voice be heard and heeded, it will be virtue's most faithful auxiliary, or if so taught it will allow you to indulge in all evil, and furnish apologies and vindications for every sin.

I. I propose to point out the characteristics of the conscience here described.

1. It is keen in its *discriminations*. It is the opposite of those obtuse moral perceptions which are slow to see moral good and evil. To some eyes everything looks alike. Again, a connoisseur will detect at a glance the beauties or blemishes in a work of art.

So, a well trained conscience is quick to see moral distinctions. It promptly says *this* is right, *that* is wrong. Sin is seen, detected, and expelled from the soul as a Gentile from the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. Its possessor has often prayed "Quick as the apple of an eye," and his prayer is answered.

2. It is strong in its *impulsions*,—that is—having seen the right it cordially accepts it, strongly embraces it, and firmly adheres to it. It is not enough that the heart is keen in its perceptions, it is equally important that it have strong affinities for the right, readily gravitates toward it, and strongly and steadily embraces it. This is not what is usually called an *impulsive nature*, which catches up every imaginary wrong, but it is that frame of soul which out of a multitude of objects and interests selects "whatsoever is honest," and utterly discards the opposite. It knows no stronger word than *duty*. Its voice is heard and obeyed *first*. Interest, pleasure, &c., must wait.

3. It is lively in its *sensibilities*. Conscience has a three-fold office to *perceive*, to *impel*, and to *reward* or

perish according as we have obeyed or disobeyed her.

You may judge of its state by the manner in which it speaks to you after some moral action is done. Have you done a *wrong* thing, one which the Bible condemns, which injures another, violates your word, or have you neglected a duty and does conscience utter no rebuke? Then you have the greatest reason to be alarmed. The sentinel is asleep at his post. The clock has run down in the night, and its larum note is heard, and its fingers point at random. Does your conscience accept of any excuse which may be suggested by chance, by ill-judging friends, or by the devil. Can you easily compromise matters with your conscience by saying that others are equally criminal or delinquent with yourselves? Can you silence its remonstrances by a mental promise to do better in the future or to devote a portion of the ill-gotten gain to charity?

On other the hand is your conscience quick to feel pain over the slightest wrong, and can you give yourself no rest until that wrong is rectified? Can you take back the ill-judged word? Confess the wrong desire? Correct the practical error? And *must* you do it, and do it promptly? And is your conscience quite as quick too see the wrong in yourself as in others? Will you give yourself a greater

latitude than you allow others to take? Do you say to your brother "let me pluck the mote out of your eye,"? Conscience indeed has mainly to do with the individual heart. It may, indeed, *see* wrong in others, but it cannot understand the motive, nor sound its depths, nor apply the remedy. And when employed in surveying others it can only employ its perceptive powers, but on ourselves the freest range is given to its *perceptions*, its *impulsions* its *sensibilities*, and the perfection of these is the perfection of conscience. This is the conscience void of offence.

II. An inquiry of equal interest and more importance relates to the manner in which such a conscience may be secured and retained.

1. To secure a conscience void of offence toward God His pardoning mercy for past sin must be secured. No individual of well-instructed conscience can feel at peace unless God has written pardon on his heart. Do you recognize God and His government, and is your conscience void of offence toward Him, then you claim either never to have violated His law, nor to have obtained His forgiveness. Oh is thy conscience toward God burdened? Hasten to lay thy burden off but *be sure* to accept of nothing but Jesus' voice saying "thy sins be forgiven," &c.

2. And then this can only be *retained* by maintaining a justified relation to God, and this can only be

held by the avoidance of every sin and the discharge of every duty.

If at any point conscience lifts up its warning voice, beware! there are breakers ahead. If it reprove, oh! search for the cause and remove it at once, and rest satisfied with no heaven but an approving conscience and dread no hell more than its upbraidings.

“What conscience dictates to be done.” Such an individual must pray “Oh may the least omission pain &c.” He must live near to God, discharge all the duties resulting from his relations to Him, and maintain a holy and ceaseless vigilance over his own soul.

3. The process of keeping a pure conscience toward man is similar. He must be converted to his fellows, as truly as to God. He *must* and he *will* make everything right between himself and the whole world. He must take everything out of their way and leave none with just occasion to question his piety. Has he wronged any in their feelings, their interests or their reputation? He must make everything right, make every atonement in his power, and make full restitution to every one whom he has wronged. I insist upon it, no conscience can be pure where this obligation is not felt. It is only pacified, not purified. As it is, you cannot die in peace or hope for heaven.

4. And this, too, can only be retained by a persistent adherence to the principles and practice of justice

and benevolence. A dishonest man, a man who will deceive, overreach, or in any way defraud his neighbor has no right to talk about a pure conscience. It is a jewel he does not bear on his heart. He may have a false brilliant, resembling the genuine, but it will not bear the tests of the great assayer. He who will gain this blessed consciousness of rectitude, the peace surpassing earthly dignities, a still and quiet conscience must be all vigilance, all eye, all ear, all watchfulness. If off his guard, if he admit evil, or refuse good, he may awake in consternation to find his treasure gone.

5. It will aid us still further if, with the apostles, we exercise ourselves herein.

(1.) By reflection on the moral quality of our actions.

(2.) By reflection on characters of distinguished excellence, as God, Christ, or the most excellent among men. So, we become "changed into the same image." In the same proportion, the conscience will be perverted, by bad precedents, company, books, &c.

(3.) Especially should its voice always be regarded. Being the highest attribute of our moral nature its voice possesses an authority which interest and passion cannot have. If you are obedient to its voice it will, like a faithful monitor, always speak, and its words will guide and cheer and bless you.

There is no greater comfort to a man in his emergencies than to be able to throw himself upon his conscious rectitude and to feel that his heart is at peace. Property may be gone, health may be gone, friends may be gone, all but his quiet conscience and his approving God. Yet still he has a treasure of which the world cannot rob him worth more than all the world besides. But if it be tampered with it will only remonstrate and upbraid, and at last will cease even to do this, but allow the individual to pass on to be punished. It will seem to go to sleep, but it only retires from view, it takes its pen of iron, and, keeping its eagle eye on all that passes, and fills its dread diary with horror. We have not had a final settlement with conscience when it ceases to clamor about our ears. It acts the part of the creditor who, despairing of securing payment from his debtor while living, contents himself with the thought that he will indemnify himself from his estate after his death. It keeps its accounts open for the day of final audit. And oh! what a day will that be when the books shall be opened! when the entire record shall be produced and the enormous debt presented. "Some men's sins go beforehand to judgment," this man's follow after. The sins of his early youth, and the growing crimes of his manhood, and the delinquencies of his whole life, rise up in terrible array to confront and accuse

him. Sometimes this is done in time, on the death bed, on which the coming events of eternity cast their dark and baleful shadows. But it will acquire a power to torment, when the alleviations of time are over. "Conscience, the torturer of the soul."

SERMON XXXV.

MEMORY.

Luke xvi: 25.—"Son, remember."

Very noble and very excellent are the faculties of the human mind. He who was created "a little lower than the angels," has retained even amid the desolations of his nature much to give him kinship to angels. Memory is the mental secretary which takes down and preserves the entire history of man. It is the portable repository in which is preserved the thoughts we conceive, the words we utter, and the actions we do. It differs from *recollection* in that the one *retains* and the other *recalls*, the one *keeps* what the other *brings back*. Now, although this distinction may be admitted to exist during the mind's abode in the body, yet we think it susceptible of a high degree of probability, if not of actual demonstration that

ultimately they will be identical, nay that the mind will be found to have retained in invisible custody everything which has been consigned to its keeping. We remember much of the past, and much we say we have forgotten, and it is certain that if all our earlier mentalities and history are retained in the mind, they are not at all times at command, they have hid themselves in the recesses of the soul, and they come not forth at our bidding, but it lies in the range of high probability that every impression made on the mind is indelible, is made for eternity. Now, the events of yesterday are swallowed up in the transactions of to-day, and the scenes of to-day will be absorbed and lost in the cares of to-morrow. But conceive that this may be a result of physical causes, of an imperfect medium through which the mind acts, and it will be evident that when the mind is left free to act, independently of a physical medium, it will act perfectly and reproduce with the accuracy of a daguerreotype, every former impression. It is a common cause to have the apparently long-forgotten events of years recalled by a train of associations, and sometimes they seem to start up spontaneously in the soul. Knowledge, which has fled from the mind on the invasion of terrible disease has gradually or suddenly returned when the invader has passed away. And who can tell but that when our physical disor-

ders and life have fled, the mind may grasp every truth with which it has been acquainted, and the minute and stupendous blend like light and shade on the tablet of the soul. The epitaph on the marble. The reading of a book. But we were to trace especially the effects of memory on the condition of men after they are disrobed of mortality and have entered upon the scenes of eternity.

We assume that mind retains its identity and powers, and attainments, after it has left its partner in the grave. Especially will it remember all the events of its moral history.

I. Take first the case of one dying in his sins, and passing to eternity. I leave out of the account all the positive inflictions of justice. I make no reference to the fearful imagery employed in the New Testament, to devils, "fire and brimstone," and the "undying worm." I look at a soul having lived out its probation, and summoned to its account, and, being found unfit for heaven it is just thrown upon his own resources to enjoy or suffer as he can. Imagine, now, his memory to be perfect, and the entire past to come rolling up before him, what will be the effect of this upon his happiness or misery. The punishment of sin will of course be partly *mental*, for

1. It is the *soul* that sins. The body is but the instrument of the soul's covetousness and lusts.

2. Mind is more susceptible of pain than the body. Every instance of suicide proves it. Good reasons can be given why the mind suffers no more in this life. It has employments, alleviations, and hopes. Business and pleasure beguile it of its sorrows. But imagine these removed.

1. Such an individual will of course remember his sins. The sins of his youth and his age, his secret and open sins, with all their circumstances and aggravations. These he will recognize as having laid the foundations of his ruin. Could he forget all his sins, it would be like extracting thorns from his soul. But he will remember them all.

2. He will remember his virtues. He knows the motive whence they sprung. He remembers that from a point near heaven he sank to hell.

3. He will remember his possessions. This was what Dives was especially enjoined to remember. Oh! I think I hear him say, "I would not remember, I would forget." But he *must* remember his gold, how gained, how used, now lost.

4. He will remember his pleasures. The pleasures of the table, of the wine cup, the ball, the theatre—of domestic life. With those five brothers of his he gambled in childhood, dallied in youth, and gathered gold in wasting age. All are now lost.

5. Especially will he remember his privileges. Have

these been great? His sorrows will be proportionate. He will remember the father who prayed, the mother who wept, the minister who warned him. The family altar will loom up. The sanctuary will be remembered. Calvary will come to mind. That night when prayer sought entrance, when conviction flashed, when conscience smote him sore. He will remember how many sought and found salvation. And now perhaps he sees them on the plains of light as he sees Lazarus on the bosom of Abraham. All these remembrances will be to him ministers of terror. I submit now that this single fact being conceded, (and no one believing in our immortality will question it,) that the mind will retain all its acquisitions and impressions for ever, and we are furnished in our own mental structure with elements, which, when developed and combined as they may hereafter be, can work out for the soul a ruin, a desolation, an intensity of horror, such as the mind can scarce conceive. External and superadded torments there may, and doubtless will be; but if there were not, the sinner shut out of heaven and shut up to eternal communion with himself will find in his own heart a hell.

II. We turn now to the more grateful inquiry, how will the everlasting remembrance of all earthly things affect the finally saved? And here we are prepared to believe that as memory will be to the lost one, of

the bitterest, so to the saved it will be one of the sweetest elements in their cup.

1. It would seem, indeed, at first view, that the remembrance of sin must always be painful ; that none but sorrowful contemplations could be had of the transgressions and delinquencies of our life. So far as we know, it is so to some extent through the good man's life, even when God is pacified towards him. It is a fitting confession which we make in our approaches to the table of the Lord. " We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for our manifold sins and wickedness ; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us. But even here our sorrows if not neutralized, are at least modified by remembering the mercy of God and the love of Christ. In heaven we shall remember our sins, but we shall remember them as pardoned. At the same time that we remember them we shall remember the atoning blood. And as he loveth much to whom much is forgiven, supreme shall be our love, and loud our praises to our redeeming Lord.

2. The saved will remember with gratitude the *privileges* they enjoyed and which they delighted to improve. They will cast glances of delighted interest along the path where gushed up streams which now make glad the city of God. They will remember those who were instrumental in their salvation,

and meeting them on the plains of light, will revert with ever-growing interest to the solicitude they felt, the warnings they uttered, and the prayers they offered in their behalf. The scenes in the sanctuary and the grove, in the closet and at the family altar, will be cherished among the holiest memories of the soul.

3. Life's elevated and sanctified pleasures, too, will be contemplated with interest in heaven. Very pleasant now in our remembrances are the scenes of our childhood. We remember the familiar haunts and familiar faces of our youth. We remember when our infant intellects took in the rudiments of education. We remember our youthful loves. The aged man who has forgotten the events of yesterday remembers these. And from our distant home on the fields of heaven, our whole life on earth will be regarded as our infantile history ; and the remembrance of these scenes will quicken the pulses of the patriarchs of heaven.

4. The sorrows and trials of life will also be remembered in heaven, but they will be remembered as past forever. They will be remembered as the sailor remembers the treacherous ocean over which he shall ride no more, as the Israelites remembered the howling wilderness. The souls under the altar will remember the dungeon and the rack, and great

Babylon shall come into remembrance, but be remembered as destroyed.

From the whole subject we deduce this practical admonition. We should store our minds and memories with such thoughts, facts and principles that we can joyfully contemplate them forever. Our chambers of imagery should be filled with beautiful tableaux written over with whatever is pure and chaste, and holy. Oh! remember that every thought is graven on the heart as with the point of a diamond; that tears however fast they fall can never cease. Every word shall echo in thy ears forever. God help thee so to live that life may be pleasant in its retrospections, and death prove the beginning of endless life and endless joy in the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON XXXVI.

REASON.

Isaiah i: 18—"Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord."

I have not chosen this passage designing to enlarge upon it in its interesting connections, but as the foundation of some remarks upon the proper use of human

reason in matters of religion—the boundaries within which it may exercise jurisdiction, and the perfect harmony of its legitimate deductions with the revelation God has given us. Reason is that faculty of the human mind by which it distinguishes truth from falsehood, which from premises deduces conclusions, which compares facts with each other, and mental impressions with external things. It distinguishes man from the brute, and marks the different stages of human advancement in knowledge and civilization. Under its control, the passions are mighty incentives to virtue, but without its guidance they are headstrong and dangerous.

To this faculty all truth must be addressed, and especially all truth which concerns our moral natures and immortal destiny. Hence the language of God is, “Come let us *reason* together,” “Bring forth your strong reasons,” “Present your bodies a living sacrifice,” “Be ready always to give a reason.”

I. Reason when employed in religion (like every thing else) has its *use* and its *abuse*, and to assign it its just *use*, and its true *limits*, is a point of some delicacy and difficulty. Upon few points have men more widely differed.

(a) Many great and good men, struck with the sublime nature of the truths of religion, have deprecated the approach of reason. They have stood at

the threshold of the temple of religion and beckoned back the approach of the rationalist, and cried "do not reason, only believe."

(b) Roman Catholicism especially substitutes faith for reason, and the more monstrous the doctrine, the more ridiculous the mummary, the greater the merit of the faith which subscribes to the one, and the complaisance which bows to the other. "I believe it because it is unreasonable," is only equalled by its kindred monstrosity, "I believe it because it is impossible." What though reason remonstrate at the doctrine of the real presence? At the legends of the saints? At the multiplied *relics*, *i. e.* the wood of the true cross, &c., &c., &c. What then? Why reason must retire and leave the ground to faith.

(c.) So with every fanatic who would have us take his vagaries on trust. The very essence of fanaticism is belief without reason and against reason.

(d) More widely still have men strayed into the opposite region of error, viz: making reason to sit in judgment on Deity, and affirm what is proper for Him to propound or require of us. Ancient Socinianism, and modern Rationalism, Unitarianism, &c., insist on bringing revelation to the test of reason, and boldly strike from the Bible and from their creed, every thing which cannot be discovered and demonstrated by it.

They cannot comprehend many of its facts and many of its doctrines, and these are explained away or discarded. Both these classes equally err. One deifies reason, the other ignores it. One assigns it no office, the other exalts it above all that is called God. The truth lies between them. Reason has its *use*, but it has its *limitation* too. It is supreme, but its supremacy is limited to its own dominions. Where it has a right to speak its voice is authoritative, but its domain is limited. God has assigned it its bounds and said, "thus far shalt," &c.

1. The first great use of reason in matters of religion, is to ascertain whether indeed God has spoken to men at all. If it be determined that he has *not* spoken, then her sphere will be greatly enlarged for the entire work of determining what and where truth is, will then devolve on her, but if reason decides that God *has* spoken, his voice must of course be heard. *It is claimed* that God has spoken, and the office of reason is to examine this claim and determine its truth. *It is claimed* that the Bible comes to us attested by evidences and authentications. Reason must look at these evidences and decide whether they do determine this book to be from God. *Miracles* confirm that claim. *Reason* must examine these miracles. Did the facts transpire? Were they miracles?

If so, how do they authenticate the Bible. *Prophecy* is appealed to. *Reason* must pronounce upon its prophetic character, and also its fulfillment, &c. She must also examine the internal and collateral evidences. And then she must sum up the case and render her decision. But let her not transcend her sphere and say "truly this bears the sign manual of the Great King, but it is unreasonable notwithstanding," for this is to exalt reason above God, and preclude Him from speaking anything we did not know, or might not have known before.

2. A second use of reason is to determine (if God has spoken) what He has said, in other words to ascertain what are the doctrines and duties contained in the Bible. If Reason decides God has not spoken, she need proceed no further in this direction, but if He has, she must humbly advance to inquire what "God the Lord" hath said. And it must be remembered that this book was written in languages no longer spoken among men. The Old Testament in Hebrew, from 5 to 15 centuries before Christ, the New in Greek, eighteen hundred years ago. Here in the department of language, grammar, criticism, history and geography, is a wide field for reason to explore, and all her researches may bear upon the sacred page to elucidate it and apply its truths.

3. But having gone thus far, reason has reached

her limits. She has identified the voice of her God and understood His meaning, and she has only to receive and obey it. Like a humbled Job, she must not answer again. This is the frontier of her empire, and she may not invade the province of heaven so as to pronounce on what God hath spoken.

(a.) "But must I believe what is contrary to reason?" I answer no, yet do not confound reason in the abstract, an all perfect reason, with the reason of man. Reason must have knowledge for its data and its basis, and the reason of God, who has all knowledge, may not be identical with ours who know so little. Why then should we demur, if God has seen proper to give us information concerning things of which we were ignorant and which we could never have found out.

(b) Again, many things transcend our reason which are not contrary to it; a multitude of things we know, where we know not the *reasons*. We see the movements on the chess-board, while the philosophy of the game may be unknown. Reason and Revelation are not antagonisms. They speak the same language; one is an infant, and one an angel. They move in the same direction, one with a crippled wing, and the other on strong pinions which never tire until they bathe themselves in heaven. And if one has uttered truth which the other never knew, so far from complaining that reason did not tell it too, I will thank

God that it has been made in a way so satisfactory and well authenticated.

(c) “ But there are some particular facts and doctrines which I cannot believe.” But why can he not believe them ? Because they conflict with certain antecedent principles which he has adopted, such as the analogy of faith, the reason of the thing, or the character of God. But what knows he of the character of God, &c., save from that very revelation. And what right has he to make a messenger of heaven wait for his answer, after his credentials are accepted because he bears *new* intelligence ? What other is of any value ! If God has told us nothing *new*, why has he spoken at all. How is His message a blessing ? How are the words of Christ, spirit and life, if they are but echoes of Socrates and Confucius ? The fact is, man is no more competent to decide on this message than to weigh mountains or measure oceans. These very doctrines and facts, may be among the corroborations of religion. They point to a Divine hand. My faith then is *reasonable*, and if the Bible is *true*, it is reasonable that you should believe it too.

II. Again, we present experimental religion as eminently entitled to be regarded as reasonable. This has a double basis, viz., *revelation* (already passed on), and *experiment*. The former proponnds it — the latter demonstrates it.

The chemist tries *experiments*, and rests satisfied in his results. We try experiments in religion. Thousands have repeated them in every age and clime; and it is unreasonable to reject their voice. The most unreasonable man in the world is the man who admits God's word to be true, and yet rests satisfied in his sins. He degrades his reason, by refusing to hear its voice — by disregarding its most urgent remonstrances. The beast follows his highest impulses — man obeys his lowest! With an attribute so angelic, how can he ally himself to the brute?

III. Every duty enjoined by religion, is a rational duty. To live and serve God, to do good to our fellow-men, is right and reasonable. We, who will believe, attain and do all that reason requires, will not greatly err.

Thus Revelation and reason give concurrent testimony. One shines like a distant star — the other like the sun of eternity. One labors, step by step — the other leaps to sublime conclusions.

I love to believe the Bible, and my assent is cordial and reasonable. Could I not believe it, I should rise dejected and sad; I should weep that my Maker had thus cast me adrift on a stormy sea; life, death, and eternity would be full of awful mysteries.

But how changed the scene, when I can lay my hand on God's great Message, and say, "God, the Lord,

hath spoken": Here let me plant my feet, and I am secure. I subscribe to its doctrines; I believe in its facts; I am consoled by its promises; I would hasten to conform to its requirements; I would secure the favor of God, as a supreme good.

1. Do I address a sceptical one? Come, let us reason together: You have almost worshipped reason

"Oh, I believe, and share the reason of a man".

"Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God."

2. Christians, let us reason: This Word is the basis of your hopes; Oh, make it the guide of your life.

3. Backsliders, let me reason with you: Why your base desertion?

4. Sinner, let us reason together: We are walking to eternity; hear the voice of Reason, Conscience, and God, and "whatsoever thy hand findeth," &c.

SERMON XXXVII.



THE SHADOW OF DEITY.



Psalms, xci: 1. — "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

This Psalm seems to be a colloquy, in which three persons participate, who (say the Jewish Rabbins), are David, Solomon and Deity.

The first makes the broad assertion of the text.

The second seizes on the great encouragement, and cries out, "I will say of the Lord," &c., &c.

The first responds, "Surely he shall deliver thee from," &c., &c.

The reason of this is given in verse 9th.

In the 14th verse God appears to verify the statement of the first speaker, and applies these promises to the second ;

"Because he hath set his," &c.

This is the phrase from which Satan made his celebrated quotation in his contest with our Savior ; but he both *misquoted* and *misapplied* it.

In quoting it, he omitted the important clause—"to keep thee in all thy ways" ; and in applying it, he referred it to Christ, although equally applicable to all good men.

This text is figurative language, and finds its exposition in the structure of the temple and in various parts of its worship.

"The secret place of the Most High" is typified by the innermost recess of the temple, called the "*sanc-tum sanctorum*", or "holy of holies." Into this sacred retreat only the high priest might enter, and he only on the great day of atonement. This entrance was an act of thrilling interest to himself and the assembled multitude.

Having entered here, he finds himself covered by the "Shekinah"; which, though radiant and glorious, is called the "*shadow of the Almighty*."

But what was once the peculiar prerogative of the high priest, has become the common privilege of every believer — each of whom has access into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We do not pass behind the mystic veil, where the Shekinah blazed, but through the *rent veil* we may come to God, even to His seat; and he who comes to Him in the way He has appointed, comes to Him in faith and penitence and prayer — who not only cometh, but *dwelleth* there — who lives in communion with God, and abides hard by the mercy-seat, even he "shall abide under," &c.

Divested of its lofty imagery, this text designates a certain character, and makes to that character a precious promise; or, rather, gives to it a glorious assurance.

I. In reference to the character, I briefly observe that, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High is characteristic, not merely of a Christian, but of an *eminent* Christian — of one who lives near to God — makes God the great object of his faith, and love, and hope — who sets God always before his face — who has a practical conviction that "thou, God, seest me," and who waits upon him in earnest, believing, and continual prayer.

Such an individual is, in an eminent sense, a holy man; one *set apart* to be the Lord's; whose eye is single and whose whole body is full of light. He is not like the Jewish high priest, who makes an *annual visit* to the secret place of God — not like the formalist, who makes a *weekly* call at the sanctuary a substitute for all other inward and outward acts of piety; but he is one who *dwells* near the great source of holiness, and is changed into the same image. The closet is this man's "sanctum sanctorum"; here he oft retires from the gaze of the world, and communes with the Invisible; and here "God comes down his soul to greet," &c. His *visits* are to the world — his *business* is with God. Like angels, whose *home* is heaven, but who speed their way to every part of Jehovah's empire, on the errands of the Almighty, his *dwelling* is in the secret place of the Most High; but his feet run swiftly in all the walks of duty, delighting, like Christ, to be about his Father's work.

II. To such an individual is made the precious promise, "he shall abide," &c.; *i. e.*, he shall secure His Almighty protection, and be heir to all His promises and all his grace. We cannot so well appreciate this promise as could those who dwelt in a sultry clime where the sun was wont to smite by day, and where a shelter from the heat was earnestly desired by the

laborer or the traveler as the greatest luxury which could be desired or imagined. The traveler on the great desert, pines for the shadow of a tree or rock or cloud, as intently as for food or drink or sleep.

But shadows cast by terrestrial objects are variable and transcient. That cast by a *cloud*, fails when the cloud glides by; that of a *rock*, is limited to a contracted area; that of a *tree*, changes its position as the sun wheels on; that of a *tabernacle*, is imperfect, at best; but the shadow of the Almighty is *permanent*, enduring through all generations; it is *unchangeable*, being incapable of *enlargement* or *contraction*; it is *capacious*, so that the universe may gather under its protection; and *perfect*, hiding from every enemy, protecting from every danger, and offering an asylum in every emergency. Dwelling under the shadow of the Almighty, this individual is secured —

1. From the sun of prosperity. Men greatly misjudge when they suppose that the sun of prosperity is less baleful than the blasts of adversity — that their piety, and peace, and salvation are necessarily secure when wealth rolls golden streams upon them — when friends smile around them, and success crowns every effort. “More the treacherous *calm* I dread,” &c. The traveler will wrap his cloak about him in a winter’s day, but will loosen and throw it off when the

sun shines warmly ; so men may, in the day of their calamity, flee to the mountain of their refuge, and hide under the shadow of Jehovah's wings, but may remain at ease in Zion, in the hour of prosperity.

The *natural* and, unless contracted, the *inevitable* result of worldly success, is to secularize the soul, and make man forget his God.

Oh ! how many have said, in the hour of their success — “I shall never be moved” ; but have found, while walking the high places of earth, that the cold breath has chilled their hearts, and their feet have well-nigh slipped.

But who suspects danger nigh while the heart is delighting itself in fatness ? Who in the hour of his success and triumph seeks the counsels and prayers of the pious lest he should be exalted above measure ? Who is alarmed for his soul when it is well with the body, or is concerned about eternal things when all the interests of time are secure ? And yet in this season of real though unappreciated danger, (all the more real and more eminent because unappreciated,) “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High,” &c. In the hour of greatest peril God will be his defence. It is difficult to multiply examples of eminent piety in high places, and yet there are enough of such examples to show the practicability of the thing. There is Daniel, the prime minister of the Persian king.

Honors hang thickly around him, parasites wait on his steps, and all rise up to do him homage. But he dwells in the secret place of the Most High. Thrice each day he seeks his closet to commune with God, and he so abides under the shadow of the Almighty that fierce lions shrink back admonished that they may not harm him whose head is shielded by Jehovah's wing. A Wilberforce has adorned the British Parliament, a Matthew Hale has graced her bench, and a Lady Huntingdon has shone in the ranks of her nobility; and all maintained their piety and usefulness, though surrounded by the honors and emoluments which office and station confer. Pious princes have sat on thrones founded in righteousness; and among the merchant princes of our own and other lands are many who consecrate their wealth and talents and services to the Lord. Has God prospered you? Has everything succeeded according to your wish? Do your children gather like olive branches around your table? Oh! hide in the secret place of God, and His shield and arm shall be your defence. Then the gifts of God shall not alienate thee from, but bind thee to the giver.

2. But the more familiar, and, perhaps, the more important truth remains to be stated, that, covered by the shadow of the Almighty, you shall be safe from the storms of *adversity* also. Let it not be supposed

that piety, even in its highest forms, exempts us from the usual trials of life. On the contrary the Scriptures assert, and experience proves, that "the Lord trieth the righteous," that "whom he loveth he chasteneth," and that they who will "live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The extent of the promise, then, is, that the Lord will sustain His people *in*, sanctify them *under*, and deliver them *from* all their trials when they have accomplished all their disciplinary purposes, and make all things work together for their good. We may not remove the thorn in the flesh, but His grace will be sufficient. Run your eye along this precious psalm and mark the calamities from which God proposes to deliver His people. These promises comprehend providential deliverances and gracious interposition in behalf of the righteous.

(1.) Who would willingly part with the precious promises which speak of temporal deliverances to the people of God?

(a.) The snare of the fowler or the machinations of Satan.

(b.) The noisesome pestilence which is the scourge of God; and it shall gleam harmlessly on the threshold of the righteous, or be the commissioned agent to bear his emancipated spirit to a higher and better life.

(c.) The terror by night. He lies down and sleeps securely, for God maketh him to dwell safely. *Night*

is usually the season of danger. *At night* the angel of death passed over Egypt. *At night* the hosts of Sennacherib were slain. Screened by darkness from human observation, and emboldened by the defenceless and unconscious state of man, the thief, the murderer and the incendiary go forth to their unholy work. But to God the darkness shineth as the light, and He can intercept the steps of the sinner, or cover with His wing the head of His people.

(*d.*) Deliverance from lions; adders and dragons, and all “noisome beasts is here promised.

On the high road of Providence is safety, and God’s people are “immortal till their work is done.” I know that this whole matter of Providence is held very loosely, that it is hard for Christians to bring God near to them, to see him concerned in the matter of lillies and sparrows, and guarding the minutest interest of the children of men. But the Scriptures reveal God as the author of the laws of nature, and represent all these laws as under His control; and who is he that can harm us while followers of that which is good?

But especially are all spiritual blessings secured to those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High. *Art thou tempted?* Of old was it written, “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly,” &c. *Are you poor?* Of many an heir of heaven has it been written, “this poor man cried and the Lord heard him,”

&c. *Are you persecuted?* Jesus spoke of his glorious benedictions for your encouragement, “Blessed are ye when men,” &c. God will either palsy the arm that is lifted against you, or He will make your bed of fire like a bed of roses. Always and every where His grace shall be sufficient for thee. He will give His angels charge over thee. On their wings they shall bear thee up in the day of calamity, and in the day of thy death will bear thee to thy home in heaven. With songs of deliverance He will compass thee about; He will be with thee in trouble to deliver thee and honor thee; with long life will He satisfy thee and show thee His salvation.

But outside of the shadow of the Almighty how great is your exposure. The very clond which was a *light* to the Jews, was a *menacing* sign to the Egyptians, charged with thunder and death. So all God’s attributes are terrible to sinners.

SERMON XXXVIII

THE EAGLE.

Deut. xxxii : 11.—“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.”

Natural history furnishes some of the most appropriate and tender illustrations of the moral truths man should know, the duties he should do, and of the encouragements given us to aid us in working out our salvation. The conduct of the eagle towards her young is a beautiful illustration of,

- I. The *discipline* God appoints for us.
- II. The *example* he places before us.
- III. The *help* which he vouchsafes to us.

I. Of discipline, “Stirreth up her nest.” She would have her eaglets fly, ’tis time they should. Other means failing, she *stirs up their nest* and makes it so uncomfortable they gladly leave it.

1. By sending conviction for sin. Man is naturally careless respecting his state, and at ease in his condition. He cries “peace! peace!” to his soul. He says I shall never be moved. God knows we are awfully deceived, that we must be humble, wounded,

slain. What does He do? He arouses our conscience. He troubles us with apprehensions. He shakes us over the pit. What for? Because he *hates* us? Nay, verily. Because He would torment us before the time, and give us foretastes of eternal vengeance? Nay, but because He would redeem us, cleanse us, and save us. He stirs our nest that we may gain strength of wing to scale the eternal hills.

2. By unsettling our earthly plans and drying up our earthly joys. See the Jews in Egypt. Why their bitter bondage? Manasseh in his pride and power. The prodigal son in distress. How many can say, "It is good," &c. You had breath. You prospered in business. You had a wife of your bosom. You had a favorite child. Why this stirring up of your nest. God would prepare you to quit it.

3. By sending upon us the infirmities and pain of age, and thus diminishing our attachments to life. This world is not our home, and yet we form strong attachments to life. To teach us that this is not our rest, and weaken our hold on earth, our tabernacle is shaken, e'er it falls. This world comes to be regarded as a rickety house, liable to be shaken down at any moment, and the eye turns away to an enduring one.

II. There is intimated the example God has set before us, "Fluttering over her young," to teach them how to use their wings, and encourage them to fly.

Pity that the examples of this world are so generally pernicious. We are imitative beings, taking shape and character from those about us. The father teaches the son. The mother the daughter. Have you good examples? God is teaching you by these. Here are the examples of the pious. Here the biographies of good men. Here the histories of the Bible. Those who have gone before have left the record of their lives. Look to God's conduct to us. Would He teach us mercy, benevolence, forgiveness, holiness? Look at Jesus' perfect example. Parents, learn the mighty power of example! As the keen eye of the eaglet watches the movements of the parent bird and then copies the motions, and in turn becomes the teacher of its own offspring, so your little one remembers all you say and will copy all you do. "And as the bird each fond endearment tries, &c.

III. But when the infant bird puts forth its effort, ventures out upon only a foundation of air, and its feeble and untrained wing flags and fails, then the parent bird quick as thought darts under its falling charge, and receiving it upon her back, bears it safely to its perch or nest. The object of letting the eaglet try its utmost strength is to improve its powers. See the mother teach her babe to walk. There are many who know not their own weakness because their strength has never been *tested*. *Love and faith, and*

patience, and integrity, will all be tested, and tested that they may be improved. When we are tried we shall come forth as gold purified seven times. In these seasons when we are trying our spiritual wings, and feel their strength, well nigh failing, how cheering the *promises* and how unfailing the grace of God. Assistance is promised and grace vouchsafed for every time of need. The eagle has two objects in spreading, &c.

1. To *support* the tender bird. It cannot fall, while the strong pinions are spread beneath. But you have the promised supports of divine grace.

2. Again, the object is to *protect* the eaglet from all enemies. Is there an enemy in sight? She soars where no foe can follow. Would the archer shoot from below. The shaft must pierce the parent bird before it can wound her tender charge. Are you beset by enemies?

(1.) Does satan *tempt* you? Well he can do *nothing* more.

(2.) Does the world press hard on you? Does a cloud of arrows fly from the fortress of your foes? You have a shield.

(3.) Are there found internal enemies? You may triumph over them. Mark in all this, the deep and tender interest of God in behalf of His people.

'Tis no especial mark of the Divine disfavor when

God stirs up our nest, takes away the light of our eyes and the joy of our hearts, and sends us forth on a pilgrimage of sorrow.

(1.) Mourner, with a heavy heart ! I am not sorry that you are disturbed, for your sorrow shall be turned to joy.

(2) Are you troubled on every side ? Is God stirring up thy nest and pouring upon thee a tide of sorrow ?

“ When tempest clouds are dark on high,
His bow of love and peace,
Shines sweetly in the vaulted sky,
A pledge that storms shall cease.”

(3.) Are you about to die ? Is the struggle hard and the valley dark ? Yet what is it to die ? To die is to begin to live. 'Tis to quit our earthly *nest*, and seek our *home*. Where is the eagle's *home* ? Not in a narrow cage ! Not in the naked bough. But away in the clear sunlight, beyond the changes of the elements and the accidents of life. And where is the Christian pilgrim's home ? “ His home is in heaven. Does death remove me *from* earth ? It introduces me to a mansion. Does it separate me from friends ? It takes me to a dearer family and links me in eternal union to all the nations of the saved. Let us not *despise* his chastening, nor faint at his rebuke.

SERMON XXXIX.

THOUGHTS.

Phil. iv : 8.—“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Our holy religion has the peculiarity of not only regulating the *life*, but of purifying the very *thoughts*. Nay, it gives moral character to actions only because of the thoughts whence they spring. The abused assertion of Solomon, “as a man thinketh,” &c., does not teach that a man may think and do what he chooses ; but only that the thoughts are the index of the man. So our Savior asserts, “it is from within, out,” &c. We are responsible for them as far as they are voluntary. This is true in the following cases :

1. When we go forth in pursuit of them and invite them to enter.
2. When we leave the heart open and unoccupied, so that they may enter.
3. When they are suggested by external agencies, and are not properly repelled from the soul.

This responsibility is not a trifling one, from the fact already adverted to, that they lie at the foundations of all characters and conduct. No sin was ever committed that did not have its fountains here. It was conceived in thought, its elements and tendencies examined, it ascended to the region of the desires and the will, was adopted by the purposes and resolves, and finally it ripened into results ; and now the man whom God had long ago marked as a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, stands forth in his true character before the world. In many cases these results may not be reached, and yet the man's guilt remains the same. If prevented only by external causes, or by fear of detection, exposure and punishment—the brand of Cain and Achan is still on his heart.

It is said that “Nature abhors a vacuum” and the all-encompassing air permeates every open space, and occupies every vacancy. So the great storehouse of thought must be ever full. Working or sleeping, in dreamy revery, or in keen contact with world,—from the time that the curious eye of infancy glances around its nursery, to the hour when our earthly palace tumbles into ruin around the death bed of worn-out humanity,—*thought* is ever active ; it flows in unfailling streams, forming the character, uttering itself in words, and moulding the whole life.

Thinking is what the soul does—just as seeing is

the function of the eye, and walking of the feet; *and it is what the soul will do forever*, when separated from the body, and connected with one which is spiritual and immortal. Surely to govern our thoughts is no small part of our work on earth. Surely we should keep our heart with all diligence. Uncontrolled, they run riot in the soul, wedding it to all unholy things, and trailing its holiest powers and affections in the slime and dust. Like mutineers on board a ship, they bring on anarchy and confusion and ruin to the soul.

I. The well-being and even the salvation of the soul requires that some classes of thought should be promptly expelled from the heart.

1. Those which arraign the providence of God, as employed in determining our circumstances and destiny. Besides being directed discontentedly to our present allotments, these thoughts look murmuringly upon the past, and glance apprehensively upon the future.

(1.) They look petulantly upon the past and arraign that Providence which appointed their lot.

(2.) They survey the present, and repine at their circumstances and state. They have not "learned to be content."

(3.) They glance upon the future and permit anxiety and apprehension to fill their hearts. Oh, restless

heart! dismiss thy complainings and quiet thy apprehensions! God reigns! "Praise Him for all that is past," &c. Write "Ebenezer" on the past, and "Jehovah Jireh" on all the future.

2. We should dismiss all evil thoughts towards our fellow men.

(1.) Angry thoughts must not be cherished. By anger I do not mean a holy displeasure against sin, but that anger which "*resteth* in the bosom," &c. Oh! repress it! Cherished, the habit will grow, and then farewell to thy own quiet and of all others about thee!

(2.) All malignant and revengeful thoughts. These are like a demon in the soul, and as a volcano's energies send forth a lava stream which consumes the vineyards and scathes the orange groves, so such thoughts despoil the soul of all that's green and lovely and turn it into one great wilderness. Universally cherished, they transform men into devils, and earth they turn to hell.

(3.) All impure and lascivious thoughts. These are evil in themselves and evil in their tendencies. They enervate the intellect and debase the affections. They lead to grossness and obscenity of language, to "foolish taking," &c. They have caused many to "mourn at the last when their flesh," &c,

3. I pause to mention only one or two other classes of evil thoughts.

(1.) Avoid all trifling thoughts. Give not over your intellect to be the play-ground of vain fancies, nor let transient imaginings run riot through thy heart. Such thoughts keep out better company, for as the learned take no pleasure in the society of the fool, or the refined in the company of the clown, so pure and elevating thoughts can have no intimacy with the vulgar herd that throng the trifler's brain.

(2.) Closely allied to these are extravagant thoughts, sometimes called castle-building! This is a wicked waste of the mentalities. In this direction the minds of the *young* are very prone to run! They throw their fancies into futurity, and imagine what they would like *to be, to have*, where to go; and all is on a plan of wild improbability.

(3.) Unseasonable thoughts should not be indulged. They will crowd into your closets and sanctuaries. Expel them as a Jew would expel a Gentile from the holy place. Drive them away as did Abraham the birds that came down on his sacrifice. They vitiate thy offering and send thee away unbenefitted. "Keep thy foot," &c.

(4.) All profane and blasphemous thoughts. This is the culmination of evil.

II. Having spent so much time in negations,

we hasten to take a brief affirmative view of this subject. Here our text shall guide us.

1. Whatsoever things are *true*.

The whole field of truth is thus thrown open to us. Whatever is true in nature, science, history and revelation is thus permitted. Moral truth, especially, should employ our thoughts. God is true, His word is true, religion is an everlasting truth, and thus redemption, purity, and eternal life are the appropriate themes of our contemplation, and great Eternity becomes the play-ground of our thoughts.

2. Whatsoever things are *honest*.

These two clauses seem to be identical but in the original the meaning is different.

It means what is becoming or appropriate in whatever station we are called to fill.

Are you a son or daughter? Honor, duty, love and obedience.

Are you a parent? Kindness tempered with authority, &c.

Are you a companion? Fidelity, love and forbearance.

Are you a citizen? Obedience to law, a rendering to Cæsar &c., should characterize thee. From all your relations spring duties &c., to be pondered well.

3. Whatsoever things are *just*.

This is not retributive justice which belongs to God ;

but rectoral and commercial justice which regulates all our dealings with one another. Think! have I been just, scrupulously and exactly honest? 'Tis worth many an earnest thought! Set memory to work to trace out any possible delinquency. Think of the great laws of justice, not laid down by Blackstone, but as founded in right and ordained of God, and seek to shape thy life by its most inflexible rules.

4. Whatsoever things are *pure*.

Invite into thy heart all pure conceptions, intentions and motives. There is no greater or more ubiquitous source of misery than an impure imagination. "To the pure all" &c. As the diseased eye makes nature's lovely face dark and unlovely; so an impure fancy sees in every countenance, in every book, in every landscape view, that which feeds the depravity of his heart. Wrap around him the darkness of night or immure him in a lonely cell, and he will still be drawing forth from the chambers of his heart, images of obscenity. Thus "Inst when it hath conceived," &c.

5. Whatsoever things are *lovely*.

This opens to us the whole world of sweet charities, and blessed amenities and kind reciprocities. It bids us admire whatever is amiable, pursue whatever is excellent, practice whatever is benevolent, and love whatever is good. It opens the soul to the sunlight of the affections and graces. As the sunshine dances

and glances among the northern hills when it makes its annual visit to Cancer, causing the snow to vanish and the flowers to come forth; so, before pure thoughts, gloomy dejection, and scowling misanthropy flee away and love and joy and peace set down in everlasting council in the soul.

6. Whatsoever things are of *good report*.

The Christian is required not only to avoid all evil, but the very appearance of evil, and we are to welcome to our thoughts not only what is good but what is of *good report*. Are evil reports in circulation? Let the morbid fancy feed on them as the crow on his carrion "but thou oh! man of God! flee these things," &c. But "if there be any virtue, any praise think on these things." Thus from the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak; and the very thoughts of our hearts being cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit we shall worthily magnify the Lord.

SERMON XL.

THE PENITENT THIEF.

Luke xxii : 43.—“Verily I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.”

The history. Paradise. Doctrines of the text :

1. Immortality of the soul.
2. Immateriality of the soul.
3. Salvation by faith, not works.
4. Instantaneous conversion.
5. Saints immediately go to heaven.
6. Divinity of Christ.
7. None need despair.
8. But none should presume.

SERMON XLI.

DEVILS NOT REDEEMED.

Heb. ii : 16.—“Verily he took not on him the nature of angels.”

That Christ has redeemed men to God by his own blood, is the great central truth of religion. As in a master piece of music the same idea is worked out

through all its changes of measure and key, dimly intimated in the prelude, more fully developed in the subsequent stages, now whispered in the treble, and now thundered in the bass, and brought out completely in the sublime and triumphant conclusion ; so redemption by Christ is the Alpha and the Omega of the scriptures, the great idea revealed in the word of God.

At the fall this redemption was promised, in all the ceremonies of the law it was typified, and in all the prophecies it was announced. Christ was the shield of Jacob, the star of Balaam, the prophet of Moses, the redeemer of Job, the beloved of the song of songs. Each successive prophet desired to see his day, and they saw it afar off ; as the time drew near the vision was clearer, until at last the angels concluded the grand concert by the sublime doxology, "Glory to God," &c. Evangelists and apostles speak and know of nothing save Christ.

But in the development of this great idea, some incidental information is given us of the existence of another order of beings, for whom Christ has made no provision ; but who, so far as we have knowledge, are under the sentence of everlasting condemnation. There is only one passage of Scripture (namely, 1 Pet. 3-19,) which has been supposed to teach their possible salvation ; but this evidently teaches no such

sentiment, but only that Christ preached through Noah to the inhabitants of the old world.

The text I have read, at first view, seems to teach that when Christ came to our world he did not assume an *angelic*, but only a *human* nature. But it will be difficult on this exposition to show why the name of Abraham rather than that of Adam is employed by the apostle. The true idea of the text is brought out in the marginal reading, namely: that he undertook the redemption of human beings, but not of fallen angels.

We shall assign some reasons for their non-redemption.

1. It was not because they had not sinned. They *had* sinned, and pioneered the ways of transgression where other feet were to wander, and stumble, and fall.

2. Not because they were not unhappy, for they were. It is in the nature of sin to make its subject wretched. It must work out this result in any state, and in any world. Every fallen spirit must feel and say, "Me miserable which way I fly," &c.

3. Not because he had grown more benevolent between the times of the two great apostacies. His heart had not grown more tender, nor did the stream of His benevolence flow from a fuller fountain when Adam fell than when Lucifer sinned.

(a) This would imply previous imperfection.

(b) It would leave him now at liberty to seek their recovery.

4. Not capriciousness.

5. Not because human nature was more excellent than angelic. On the contrary, man was created a little lower than the angels. But this diversity of procedure on the part of God and Christ can be accounted for on one or all of the following grounds.

1. The angels were first in the transgression. They first passed the Rubicon that separated between vice and virtue, they led the way into the world of transgression, and guilt, and misery. Instances analogous to this are found in all human governments where the leaders in rebellion have been condemned while their associates have been pardoned, and taken into favor, or at least had an opportunity of restoring themselves to the favor of their sovereign. Hancock and Adams in the United States, Kossuth in Austria. Thus God may have made these everlasting warnings to others.

2. Man fell in the infancy of his being. The lights of history had not kindled about him. He had just started on the high road of existence. Protracted acquaintance with the laws, and government, and character of God, had not had time to operate upon his hopes and his fears. We have no positive infor-

mation on the subject, but it is probable that the angels fell from a state of more perfect knowledge and of larger experience, and in the same proportion their guilt is greater and their punishment more extreme.

3. Man fell through foreign solicitation. He was waylaid by a terrible enemy while on his way of duty. Temptation, in Adam's case may be urged as a circumstance calculated to mitigate his crime, for he may have been ignorant of a tempter, as he was until now innocent of crime. But the angels fell without foreign temptation. They never could say "another deceived and beguiled me, took advantage of my ignorance, and inexperience, and led me on to ruin." Unseduced they led the way to ruin.

4. Each angel fell *for himself*. There subsisted among them no federal relations. One did not fall for the rest, nor the rest fall in one; but each one had the issue distinctly presented to himself. Each chose the way he would take, and that was the way of transgression and ruin. On the other hand, Adam fell for his posterity. We have all "sprung from the man whose fatal fall," &c. "By one man, sin entered," &c. It seems meet then, that a Savior should be provided for us, through whom the evils of the fall may be averted.

These reasons seem to justify the universal Sove-

reign in providing for the redemption of man, and in withholding offers of pardon from rebel angels. And if our inquiries respecting the reasons for Jehovah's doings in reference to fallen spirits seem irreverent and irrelevant, it is surely always reverent and always proper to adore that grace which saves us — to have our hearts kindled with gratitude and fired with love for the salvation rendered possible for us through Christ.

Whatever may be the ultimate purposes of God toward fallen angels — by whatever reasons He may have been influenced in leaving them in a state of absolute hopelessness, and whatever may be the exact teachings of our text, it is a faithful saying, "*Art thou come to torment us before the time?*" was the deprecating inquiry of some of the fallen spirits. They never inquired whether He had come to *save* them, and only feared the doom, which they knew to be certain, was just at hand — that the respite they were enjoying before "judgment, should come upon them to the uttermost," was about to be abridged, and they tormented before the appointed time. They seemed to know that the coming of Christ portended no good to them, or their kingdom. Hence, they met Him at the threshold with stern opposition — raged during the time of His abode on earth with unprecedented fury, and, by the aid of a treacherous disciple and

opposing Jews and obsequious rulers, brought about His cruel death.

But *his death was our life*. Through His blood alone have we access to God, and an entrance into the kingdom of Heaven.

And let me speak an earnest word — a word which cannot be too often spoken — that whoever rejects Christ, steps over from that salvable ground on which he now stands, and comes into the exact position and relations of those fallen spirits for whose recovery there is no provision in the Gospel, and for whom there is no place in heaven. Rejecting this only hope, you ally yourself with the unredeemed enemies of the Lord ; and, in the issue of things, will have part and place with them in outer darkness, and in “everlasting fire.” And it seems quite evident, both from the reason of the thing, and from Holy Scripture, that the doom of lost men will be more severe than that of the fallen angels. They have never rejected Christ — they have never turned a deaf ear to the invitations of the Gospel ; but you do this every day ; and all the while a deadlier sword than Damocles saw, hangs over your head.

In your eternal communings with lost spirits in the far-off world of wo, you may encounter a thunder-scared fiend, who was once an angel of light. And

when he tells how pure and happy he once was, and you enquire how he *could* fling such happiness away; oh! with what keen invective might he not retort — “how could *you* reject Christ — neglect His great salvation, and come to this place of torment?” And the upbraiding of your own conscience will intensify your sorrow, and render you speechless!

SERMON XLII.

FADING AS THE LEAF.

Isaiah lxiv: 4-6.—“We all do fade as a leaf.”

The Scriptures always avail themselves of the illustrations which nature, science and art, supply to unfold the condition, duty and destiny of men. The autumnal leaf and human beings have several points of analogy which we shall point out.

1. They are alike the objects of Divine skill and Divine care.
2. This analogy holds in the gradual development and growth of each to a state of maturity.
3. This brings us to the point of analogy which the text suggests, viz: both are fading and passing away.
4. That limit is soon reached. The season of bloom in both cases is very short.

5. And what is true of individual man is true of successive generations.

6. But here the analogy fails, as all analogies do when pushed to extremes. We can calculate with much precision when the *leaf* will fade, but we can make no such calculation with regard to *men*.

7. The analogy also fails between the fallen leaf, and the fallen body of men in their ultimate condition.

8. The leaf possesses no principle of everlasting life.

SERMON XLIII.

PRISONERS OF HOPE.

Zech. ix: 12.—“Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee.”

I. Man a prisoner.

1. To habit.

2. Appetite.

3. Passion.

4. Pleasure.

5. Interest.

6. Sin.

7. The Devil.

II. A prisoner of hope.

1. An allusion to the Hebrew captives waiting for the year of Jubilee.

2. The cure of man is not remediless ; had it been, no exultations would have been given.

III. Turn ye to the "strongholds." City of refuge.
"The Lord is my rock and fortress."

IV. He will render double unto you.

1. Deliverance from chains.

2. Protection from enemies.

OBSERVE.

1. The transforming power of grace on the heart.

2. The security of the Christian.

3. Alarming state of the sinner.

SERMON XLIV.

HARVEST PAST.

Jer. viii : 20.—The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

This is the language of the Jews when their lovely land was laid waste.

It appears to be the language of mourning over privileges gone.

PROPOSITIONS.

1. Every human being is destined to an eternity of conscious being.

2. The character of that existence depends upon the decisions and conduct of this life.

3. There are seasons peculiarly favorable for securing a preparation for heaven.

(1) Youth. (2) Revivals. (3) Afflictions.

4. The condition of those who allow these gracious seasons to pass, is most deplorable.

(1) The loss of everything.

(2) Irreparable loss.

(3) Inexcusable loss.

5. Many will take up this lamentation who now expect salvation.

SERMON XLV.

LUKEWARMNESS.

Rev. iii: 15, 16.—I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

The messages sent by Jesus through John to the seven churches of Asia were brief, but replete with

stirring statements, threatnings, promises, and exhortations. It is remarkable that these churches had degenerated even in their infancy into such a condition that strong rebukes were demanded, and only the single churches in Philadelphia and Smyrna were found worthy of entire approval.

The final epistle is to the Laodiceans, who were lukewarm.

1. Christ commences by assuring them that he *knew* them. And Christ knows us. He sees not only our conduct but our hearts.

2. He declares their state neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm.

3. He expresses His dislike of this. "I would thou wert either cold," &c.

4. Expresses His purpose respecting them. "I will *spew* thee," &c.

I. What is lukewarmness?

1. Not positive hostility to Christ.

2. Not absolute indifference.

3. Not fervent love and zeal.

4. But such an interest in the subject as leads us to desire its advantages without its sacrifices or duties,—it is the form of Godliness without the power,—it is being at ease in Zion.

II. Being thus a reprehensible state it will seek *disguises*.

1. One covers up a lukewarm heart amid the forms of religion.

(1) The Roman Catholic makes a great virtue of Friday, fasts and Lent, and bowings, and crossings; but of regeneration, faith and holiness, knows nothing.

(2) The Churchman thinks that baptism and confirmation and the sacrament about the whole of religion; and he has "Devotions every grace except the heart."

(3) The moralist is a stickler for "annis mint and cummin"; but neglects "the weightier matters of the law."

2. Another disguise of lukewarmness is *zeal for denominational views and usages*.

3. A lukewarm heart is sometimes disguised by a multitude of words. Generally out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, but sometimes men's words are smoother than oil, but inwardly they are drawn swords.

4. Lukewarmness sometimes puts on deep humility and great modesty. A man is *too diffident* to confess Christ, to warn sinners, to pray in his family. Oh, my brother, *lukewarmness* not *diffidence* is your great disorder.

5. Great zeal against certain forms of sin.

II. But there is nothing hid which shall not be revealed; and lukewarmness, although covered up in many disguises, has modes of developement which renders its presence apparent to the eyes of spiritual man. We need not wait till the day of judgment, it can be known now.

1. And here the Scripture proverb I have quoted, holds true, "Out of the abundance of the heart," &c. *A worldly conversation* is a sure evidence of a lukewarm heart.

2. Neglect of the Bible.

3. The manner in which it is read, will aid one in determining the state of his soul.

4. He is lukewarm as a Christian, who has no family altar.

5. Who neglects *secret* prayer.

6. Who neglects prayer-meetings and other social means of grace.

7. if a man be lukewarm in religion, he will be indifferent to the souls of others.

8. In short, by a lack of deep interest in the things of religion. God is earnest, angels are earnest, heaven is full of earnest joys, and hell of earnest woes; and oh, what is the state of that man's heart who is deeply interested in everything else, but in whom you can awaken no interest on the subject of salvation.

IV. The *evils* of the state are numerous and great.

1. It evinces a low estimate of the character and claims of God.

2. An undue exaltation of the interests of this present world.

3. If not essential hypocrisy, it fast tends to that result.

4. It neutralizes the power of the ministry.

5. It evinces a reprehensible indifference to the prosperity of the Church and the salvation of souls.

Of such, the Scriptures draw a dark portrait, which it is unpleasant to contemplate and re-produce.

1. They are wells without water.

2. Clouds carried about by winds ; they give promise, but produce only disappointment.

3. Lamps without oil, which when most needed will fail.

4. Another figure. There dwell on some dangerous coasts a class of men called "wreckers." It is their business to decoy ships upon the rocks to plunder them. On a dark night they kindle lights at dangerous points, the vessel comes toward it as to a beacon of safety ; it sweeps on and strikes the rocks, and then the wreckers begin their dreadful work. Luke-warm and backslidden souls are spiritual wreckers. They say we are light — follow us.

SERMON XLVI.

SMALL THINGS.

Zach. iv : 10.—“Who hath despised the day of small things?”

For seventy years the Jews had pined in bitter bondage in Babylon. At length a royal edict was issued by Cyrus permitting their return. They found Jerusalem a heap of ruins—their holy and beautiful house burned up with the fire. As when our pilgrim fathers touched this wilderness they first built a temple to their God, so the first care of the returned Jews was to erect their ancient temple. There were great obstacles in their way arising from,

1. The greatness of their work.
2. Their own feebleness.
3. The malice of their enemies.
4. The prohibition of the king.

Zachariah and Haggai encouraged them by assuring them of the favor of the Lord. They assured the feeble Jews that the house should be built; but “not by might,” &c. “Who art thou, O, great mountain?” To answer their doubts they inquired, “who hath despised the day of small things?”

The great truth taught by this text is, that God does not despise the day of small things, or set a low estimate on humble efforts in a good cause. The Church frequently needs the encouragements which this view presents. Obstacles dishearten us and our own weakness alarms us. It is cheering to know that God can conquer by few or by many; that small means and humble endeavors will secure the notice and blessing of God.

Men adapt means to ends. But the ways of God are unlike the ways of men. He can thresh a mountain with a worm. A poet asks, "has not God still wrought by means?" &c. I answer, yes; but it is His chosen plan to work by small means.

1. See this illustrated in creation.
 2. In the seige of Jericho.
 3. Gideon.
 4. David.
 5. The establishment and spread of Christianity.
- "God hath chosen," &c.

1. Small means accomplish great results by *combination*. Every great object is composed of elements. The *shower, light, earth, ocean*. Suppose each element should separate itself from the mass on account of its smallness. "What if the little rain should say." "What if the shining beam of noon." Now apply this morally. As separate soldiers compose the ar-

mies of kings, so the hosts of God are made up of individual Christians. Every Christian is a ray of light, and together they are the light of the world. See the power of concentrated influence, united prayer, gathered contributions.

2. By the *especial blessing of God*. It has pleased God to promise and often to give His especial blessing to humble means and efforts. The philosophy of this is, that it takes away all chance of attaching virtue to the *instrument*. It puts honor upon God, instead of attaching praise to man. The oculist may restore sight by remedies; Christ by a word. Armies may dig down a mountain; God can hurl it down by a breath. Man lays his magazines and mimics the earthquake; God springs His mine and desolates a nation at a blast. Man can burn London or Moscow; God can kindle a bonfire of worlds.

So in the department of morals and religion. "Except the Lord build," &c. Here is the only rational foundation of hope for the church. The Lord of hosts is with us. Long ere this, "If it had not been that the Lord was on our side," hope had fled, and the last ray of light had gone out. But ever in the extremity of the Church has the voice of God been heard saying, "fear not, for I," &c.

INFERENCES.

1. If God does not despise the day of small things we should not.

2. Observe how little things contribute to form the character.

3. *Conviction* has small beginning.

4. The work of grace in the heart usually has humble beginnings. Two cautions are necessary to the young disciple.

(1.) Do not despise and throw away the light and joy you do have because it is not greater. As well may the student despise the rudiments.

(2.) Do not suppose the height attained. Many backslide by supposing that they know and have all there is.

5. Despise not the humbler walks of usefulness.

(1.) Labor in the Sabbath School.

(2.) Labor directly for the salvation. Are you disheartened? "Who art thou, oh! great mountain?"

(3.) In the walks of benevolence. Both the processes by which small means produce great results are seen here.

(a.) We make little offerings to the missionary cause, small in themselves, but vast in the aggregate. The little rills become a river, and roll in waves of joy forever.

(b.) And upon each little offering prayerfully laid

on God's altar an especial blessing may be expected. I see a widow throw a farthing in.

And thus the *leaven* is at work in the world. Soon, like the morning light, it shall flash across the earth and wrap the kingdoms in a blaze. "Saw ye not that cloud arise?" The *grain of mustard seed* shall throw its branches aloft, and shake its fruit like Lebanon. The stone cut from the mountain shall fill up the whole earth.

SERMON XLVII.

TRUE AND FALSE ZEAL.

II K. x: 16.—"Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord."

This is part of a conversation between Jehu and Jehonadab, the former a selfish, ambitious, and unscrupulous demagogue, the other a staunch teetotaller, a great reformer and the true author of the Maine law. These chapters contain what is known of Jehu, and Jer. xxxiv, gives much information of Jehonadab. This conversation took place when Jehu was driving in hot haste to Samaria to secure the throne of Israel. *Just at this time* he needed the assistance of the old teetotaller; at an other time he would have spurned him from his path. But now he needed friends. Did

you ever see a man exceedingly polite and accommodating just before election? He is every body's good friend. He can dispense a bow to all and a dollar when necessary. See Absalom in the king's gate. Like a true politician he shakes hands with every one who comes and says "see now thy cause is good, and "oh! that I were made judge," &c. I seldom have been near a political gathering, but I confess I have sometimes just looked in to see Jehu and Absalom.

The hypocrisy of Jehu lays in the fact that while he was actuated by sheer selfishness, he professed to have a supreme regard for the public good and to be fired with zeal for the Lord. While true zeal for the Lord is demanded by every relation which we sustain to Him and to the world, while it is good always to be zealously affected in a good thing, there is a zeal which is not according to knowledge or according to truth. I shall aim to expose the counterfeit and point out the genuine article.

1. True religious zeal is not a personal zeal. It aims not at the exaltation of self. It makes not personal ambition and aggrandizement the great object. Every religious impostor professes to be actuated by a regard to the Divine glory and to have received illumination from God, to be sent on a special mission by Him, and actuated by zeal in his cause. Were he to announce his true character and plans, he, of course,

would defeat his object. Hence, he conceals his ulterior purposes, and while actuated by nothing but personal ambition, he cries "come see my zeal." So cried *Jehru* when his sword was dripping alike with guilty and innocent blood. So cried *Henry VIII*, when he threw off the authority of the Pope, only to be a Pope himself.

2. It is not denominational zeal. This is but a widening of personal zeal, a transfer of one's energies from self to a sect or party. It is possible for a zealous man who is employing every energy to build up the particular denomination of his choice to suppose it is all for God, while he stops far short of Him. To win souls is highest wisdom ; but it should be to win them not merely to the church but to God ; nor from a kindred church, but from the world, and sin, and Satan. The triumph of a party may not be the advancement of the public good—the swelling of the membership of a church—the peopling of the skies.

3. It is not a zeal for forms and things comparatively indifferent. No greater zealots can be found than the Roman Catholics ; but it is a zeal for forms, for crucifixes rather than Christ ; for wafers and wax candles, and beads and bowings ; for confessions, and crossings, for penance and Peter-pence, while high and holy interests are ignored and forgotten.

4. It is not a *persecuting* zeal. "I was zealous to-

ward 'God,' says Paul. It was zeal that gave birth to the crusades, and left the bones of millions to bleach under an Asiatic sky. It was zeal that enacted the slaughter of St. Bartholomew's day, and kindled the fires of Smithfield.

II. We are now prepared to state the nature and workings of true religious zeal. It is no less ardent than the spurious, but it selects worthier objects and pursues them by directer processes.

1. There is the abnegation of self. The cause she advocates absorbs all personal considerations.

2. But while *self* sinks, God and his cause are exalted.

3. And this enables us to see more fully the nature of zeal. It is nothing else than fervent and active love. He who excuses his passions, his intolerance, his implacability on the ground of his zeal makes as great a mistake as he who should account for light by darkness, or for good by the fact and presence of evil. True zeal is true love in its *higher* forms. It is love in its *active* forms.

4. Such zeal is necessarily militant. Michael and his angels *fought* in heaven, for Jehovah's throne was invaded, and Christ's true soldiers on earth must also fight, not with carnal but spiritual weapons.

5. True zeal being thus based on everlasting principles, and aiming at stupendous results will of course

operate uniformly and permanently. It only requires that this zeal become universal, and like ten thousand fires kindled in a prairie they will blend into one and wrap the world in a blaze of light, and earth become a preparation for, and a counterpart of heaven.

SERMON XLVIII.

SPIRITUAL SLUMBER.

Jonah i. 6. — “What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God.”

The history.

Text indication,

I. Of the sinner's situation.

1. Not in the path of duty.
2. He is conscious of it.
3. In great danger.
4. Unconscious of that.
5. May be awakened.

II. Of the sinner's duty.

1. Survey the extent of danger.
2. Entertain just alarm.
3. Anxiously inquire for ways of escape.
4. Call earnestly upon God.

SERMON XLIX.

NO NIGHT IN HEAVEN.

Rev. xxii : 5.—There shall be no night there.

This cheering announcement unfolds one blessed feature of the saints' final rest.

Heaven is not only a state but a place having boundaries and limits.

Its location is not revealed. Dr. Dick supposes it is at the *central point* of the material universe.

1. The *causes* of night do not there exist.
2. No *necessity* for it exists.
3. It may be the center and fountain of light.
4. God is the light of heaven.

II. No mental night of ignorance. At its best estate, humanity is shrouded with ignorance and mystery.

1. There will be no lack of *objects* to investigate.
2. No lack of mental capacity. I do not hold that all will have equal capacity. All will have enlarged powers.
3. No lack of *opportunity*. The clogs to the intellect will be removed. Time enough. The fatigues and wants of the body will not press.
4. No lack of facilities and hopes. The elder sons

of heaven will delight to lead forward the infant intellect.

III. No moral night of sin. This is the darkest cloud that ever settled on the habitations and hearts of men.

IV. No penal night of suffering. Suffering is a result of sin. Look over the earth, Oh! what a Lazar house do I inhabit. I see age with its infirmities and pains; disease in a thousand protean forms; battle-fields where the war horse trails his fetlocks in blood; hospitals, death beds and graveyards. But all causes of suffering cease in heaven.

I have not entered upon a consideration of the positive immunities and joys of heaven. I have only insisted that it is free from natural darkness, mental ignorance, moral disorders, and physical sufferings. Who is competent to enter upon the affirmative view and tell us what heaven is. We know what earth *is*, and can thus infer what heaven *will* be.

1. Heaven is a motive to a holy life. "The pleasures of sin" (make the most of them) are but for a season."

2. Form characters adapted to heaven.

3. Bear with submission and fortitude the various ills of life. To one ripe for the skies death is gain, and sudden death is sudden heaven

